

MAQAM-E-MAHMUD

Comprising Seven Chapters on seven important distinctive aspects of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's blessed life, this book is a modest contribution and addition to the seerah, a highly important genre of the Islamic library and an outshining star of the whole Muslim intellectual and academic enterprise. The book, simultaneously, is a restatement of the finality and commonality of Allah's Message to mankind through Muhammad Rasul Allah.

Urdu presentation :

Mr. Mufti Md. Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi

English Version

Md. Ibrahim Khan

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Published by :

Mufti Zafeeruddin Academy,

Jamia Rabbani, Jamia Nagar, Manorva Shareef Post Sohma
Via Bithan Distt. Samastipur, Bihar (India)

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by

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DEDICATION

In his description of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), the great poet of Islam, Hassan bin Thabit al-Ansari says :-

*You have been created free from all faults;
As though you have been created as per your wish.*

Shaikh Sa'adi of Sheraaz offered his tribute to the Prophet in his following celebrated poetic lines:

By virtue of your accomplishments and perfections

You climbed up the heights.

Your radiance dispersed all darknesses.

Best are your moral traits and behaviour upon you,

Be peace and blessings.

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**Impression of this book as expressed by the Late
Maulana Muhammad Salim Qasmi, Rector Darul
Uloom (waqf) Deoband, Vice President AIMPLB**

Muqam-e- Mahmood---Distinctive Features of the Seeraturun - Nabi is a life account of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Since the *Seerat-e-Muhammadiya* refers to the life accounts of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who embraces all the perfect aspects of the most excellent and superb individual out of the entire mankind, the writer receives great encouragement from the Unseen and experiences the Divine support without fail. A complete work on the Seerah must combine all the aspects required for an elaborate introduction of the perfect traits of humanity. It is because of the fact that Muhammad Rasul Allah (PBUH) is the only perfect man who embodies in his being all the traits of perfection and human superlativity. His Seerah is unique by virtue of that it is absolutely incomparable.

The book in hand has been authored by Maulana Mufti Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi. It seeks to highlight those aspects and the distinguishing features of the person or the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which make it the *Seerah* of the most perfect man and the Final Prophet of Allah towards the entire mankind. In like manner, it sheds light on those universal perfections and unequalled moral characteristics which immensely contributed to the formation and development of the personality of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). By virtue of its comprehensibility the book comes as a very good guide to the life of the Prophet (PBUH), and tells us the accounts of

his life in an interesting manner. Being a topic of an incomparable import, it is obviously too difficult for any human being to do justice to it save Allah ta'ala Himself. The learned author, however, has left no stone unturned to make his work as useful and informative guide to Seerah for the readers as possible. The life accounts of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) have been presented in a lucid and interesting way. May Allah ta'ala enable the learned author to produce more works on different aspects of Islamic teachings in still useful way.

Muhammad Salim Qasmi

January 10, 2016

FOREWORD

Much as the *seerah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the subject on which, during the course of the last fourteen centuries of the Islamic history, has been written and read so much in every language and idiom of the world that no other subject has ever been so fortunate to be treated and read as much. However, despite this huge and formidably vast literature on Seerah and its multifarious aspects, it would not be proper to claim that justice has been done to the topic of *Seerah*. On critically studying this literature as we come across some repetitions of the facts, so we encounter many additions as well. Each evolving age brings to light some hitherto unknown and unexplored aspects the Seerah and every new age of the human history lends new direction to the study of the Seerah. It is indeed a never-ending chain of marvels emerging from the Seerah. In fact, it is the vast treasury of knowledge and marvels which reveals a new thing each day. With the increasing inventions and developments the world is making each day the Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(PBUH), too, has unfailingly been revealing its splendid aspects to the world of humanity. This testifies to the fact that the Prophet Muhammad's noble life and his personal qualities are never a matter to be summed up in a few narrow circles and limited pages. His name is Muhammad; in earlier Scriptures he is named as *Ahmad*, his highest position with Allah ta'ala is *Muqam-e-Mahmood* ; he will be holding the *Liwa al- Hamd* on the Day of Judgment in presence of the entire creation---glory to Allah. The man of such an

incomparably higher position with Allah the Creator must command respect and deserve praise and appreciation beyond measure and count. No tongue or pen is ever able to do justice to the greatness of his Seerah and the accounts of his untainted life.

At occasions, this humble author, too, had opportunities to write about different aspects of the Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). And, like the last person out of the aspirants of buying Yusuf, I have always been part of this blessed caravan in the hope that maybe my name be placed before the Holy Prophet (PBUH), and this might make me attract his intercession on the Day of Judgment.

The book in hand is not something systematically written in a chronological order. It is just an anthology of my papers written on different occasions under varying situations. These pieces of writing in fact are the expressions of my deep love and attachment towards the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which, with all respect, I am presenting to him in the present book form. This anthology includes my those papers which seek to highlight the distinctive features of his blessed Seerah and underscore their significance in the contemporary world of enlightenment'. In the same breath, it draws a comparison between the characteristics of the teachings of the preceding Prophets and those of the *Khatam al Nabiyyin* in terms of their comprehensiveness and superiority, thereby to establish it that no other Prophet's teachings or the cultural and civilisational history could be equalled with those of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Today the world needs more than ever to know and embrace the

Message and teachings of the Last Prophet (PBUH). Towards this purpose the Muslims are required to double their endeavour.

The book has been arranged in seven chapters. These chapters in fact are seven separate papers written on different occasions.

Brief summary of the seven chapters' contents one by one:-

Chapter One

This is in fact the preparatory chapter, and intends to spell out the primary goal of our studying the Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It tells us, in brief, what results a proper study of the Seerah bear. While studying the Seerah and going through his life accounts a believer can not afford to stay empty-minded; he should rather seek light and guidance from his blessed life remaining closer to him in his faith and perception. The Seerah contain a fuller ability to change and reform the entire humanity. It is never a matter of the past, with lost efficiency. Rather, it is still as much full of vigor and capabilities of changing the human life and delivering the world from darkness of disbelief to the life of belief and faith in the Realities of the Unseen as ever before. Being the Last Messenger of Allah towards mankind, with deep concern for the guidance of the entire humanity, the thrust of this chapter, therefore, is to press home the need to study the Seerah of the Prophet (PBUH) in order to bring a change in one's life and reshape it along the lines of his noble and universal teachings. No other Prophet's seerah is now existant in the world without human interpolations

and distortions which rendered them beyond recognition. Amidst the entire history of the prophethood it is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) whose life is completely enshrined in the living pages of the history. The Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is in fact a shining book which illuminated the world in the past and the world needs the same light today. Without having a deep conviction in these primary truths any study of the Seerah is bound to remain mere an academic exercise, with no substantial avail.

Chapter Two

This chapter seeks to propound the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) as the greatest one as compared to those of all other Prophets and Messengers of Allah. In the process, it spells out that in the entire human history there had been no other Prophet than Muhammad (PBUH) to have been sent with a Universal Message; whose Prophethood transcends all boundaries of times and climes ; and who has been so successful in leaving his indelible imprints on the entire human history.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses in detail the nature and scope of Muhammad Rasulullah's supremost character as the Messenger of Mercy towards mankind and all the worlds. Unlike the messages of the Prophets of the past which were addressed to particular people, Muhammad (PBUH) is the Final Messenger of Allah raised with a universal Message ; and this forms the most outstanding feature of his Prophethood. The universality of his

Message is not a matter of usual character; it is a matter of great pride not just for the Muslim Ummah, rather for the humanity as whole. In the past, this outstanding feature of his Prophethood has been highlighted by many Muslim scholars, and a sizable number of books touch upon this important aspect. In the Urdu language the work of the Late Qazi Sayyid Sulaiman Salman Mansurpuri is undoubtedly a masterpiece. This a very useful work. Although written strictly in chronological order, the author has prepared a separate volume to deal with this highly significant feature of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) and has tried his best to do justice to it. With the sweet and graceful language and versatility of its content, the book stands unique across the spectrum. In preparing this chapter I have heavily drawn upon this work. Its citations and comments on the religions of yore have particularly been of immense help. May reward him best. This chapter of my book seeks to highlight this feature of the Message of Muhammad Rasulullah (PBUH).

Chapter Four

Matchless fortitude, consistency, firm resolve in the face of suffering, loss, hardships deprivations: the life of the Prophets in the mirror of the calamitous events iof his life

In this chapter I have attempted to briefly mention unutterably sad events of his life, including the notable natural disasters which hit life hard. There is a hadith which reads as: "The people who suffered the most in their

worldly life are the Prophets of Allah; then suffered those who are below them in gradation. "

This means that the suffering and afflictions hit the Prophets in proportion to their positions with Allah. This establishes it beyond doubt that the *Grand Nubuwwah* and the *Immamat* of the Prophets of Allah is the lot of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the exclusion of all other Prophets. This too has been propounded as an unequalled distinction of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is the above cited hadith which prompted me to write on this topic. *Masaibun -Nabi*, written by my great teacher Late Mufti Muhammad Zafirud Din Miftahi on the suggestion of Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani, is a valuable work on the topic. Yet I could know about it only after completion of this chapter , so I have not been able to benefit from the contents of this book.

Chapter Five

Worldwide Revolution: Muhammad Rasulullah (PBUH) as the Prophet of Revolution

This chapter discusses the outstanding aspects of the revolutionary character of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood in terms of its depth, its all- embracing nature, its highly positive and totally constructive effects on his contemporary world and in changing the course of the human history for ever. Drawing a comparison between his miracles and those of the Prophets that preceded him, this chapter, among other things, seeks to establish his superiority over all other Prophets. The teachings he bequeathed to the world are far too

comprehensive and illumined every aspect of human life for ever. Amidst the long list of the Prophets we have none other than him who effected the whole of mankind so greatly. Maulana Wahidu Din Khan's *Peghamber-e- Inqilab* is a very comprehensive work in this regard. Though the latter work is decades earlier, I could not benefit from it.

Chapter Six

Universal Refuge: mankind on the threshold of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

This chapter is dedicated to discuss the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)'s all- embracing and all- inclusive attitude towards the entire mankind. With his advent to all classes of humanity of all times and climes, Muhammad Rasulullah (PBUH) , like his teachings, was absolutely free from all the prejudices and inhuman considerations of creed, caste, colour and geographical boundaries. No one ever got disappointed with him after approaching him. Even the most ardent enemies of his religion and person were never deprived of his magnanimity and the vast shade of his forgiveness. He never turned down the request of a person in need; he always offered his maximum help to the people in distress instead. His magnanimity, his superlatively high moral attitude towards the friends and foes stand incomparable in the entire human history. This chapter has been prepared in the light of the ahadith and narrations scattered throughout the hadith and the Seerah literature.

Chapter Seven

Worldwide Plan for the Propagation of the Message of Islam

By its contents this chapter seeks to present the Message of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and its way of propagation he adopted as a worldwide strategy to introduce it to all sections of mankind. In the process, it asserts, among other things, that success is the lot of only those propagation drives and movements whose work is in lines , both in content and import, with the way and approach of the Prophet (PBUH). Its effects shall be felt worldwide. Any approach at variance with the Prophet's way is doomed to failure, or will receive only partial success, narrowed down only some areas and times, and eventually will give way to internal disputes and inter-sectional schismatic squabbings.

According to the above description I have tried my best to highlight the distinctive features of the Holy Prophet's life, thereby underscoring his person's universal character as the Last Messenger to the entire mankind.

In the past, there have been made many efforts by a number of Ulama to mention the characteristics and versatility of his personality. Suyuti' Al-Khasais al- Kubra, for instance, is an exclusive work on record. Beside him, there have been many authors, particularly his biographers, who have thankfully attempted to mention and highlight them in a very beautiful manner. My work, as has just been put above, is intended specifically to highlight those aspects of his Prophethood and person as are the constituents of his all-out perfections leading him

to an eternal leadership of mankind as the Last Messenger of Allah. This position earned him the Station of the *Muqaam-e Mahmood* in the Next World, the highest and closest station to Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* a man could ever aspire for. In today's volatile and restless world the significance of his Message's universality and the Holy Messenger's universal character have gained even more, and so has doubled the responsibility of the men of Islamic teaching. Were the world should re-adopt the message and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it may regain peace and prosperity once again.

Maqam-e- Mahmood

The present body of the seven chapters, according to the preceding description, has been given the name as *Muqam-e-Mahmood*. This is in view of that the book, being mere an account on the details of his personal life, is primarily about the Holy Prophet's perfections pertaining to his Message, his high moral precepts, his noble teachings and their implementation into the actual human practice. It is these perfections whose combined presence in the bro of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has led him to earn the unequalled position of the *Muqaam-e Mahmood* in the world of the Hereafter.

In the Holy Scripture too we have a reference to the term *Maqam-e-Mahmood*. (Bani Israel 17: 79). The last clause of this verse proclaims that Allah ta'ala will elevate the Prophet (PBUH) to the position of *Muqaam-e Mahmood*, an exalted position in both the present world and the Next. The *Muqaam-e Mahmood* has variously been explained by the exegete fraternity. Apart from other commentators,

Hafiz Ibn Kathir, an exegete of renown, has mentioned, in his exegetical, work most of narrations and ahadith about it and discussed the merits of them one by one. Following is a brief summary of this Ibn Kathir's discussion.

It will be a position of eminence, and one which will evoke universal appreciation and praise.

It is a position of deep respect and unending praise, where the Holy Prophet (PBUH) will be the object of everyone's envy and praise.

According to some reports, this is a very special and enviably high position which will be bestowed upon him on the Day of Judgment in front of the entire creation.

However, most of the narrations support the view that the *Muqaam-e Mahmood* in fact is the station of the *Shafa'at-e- Kubra* (the Great Intercession). On the Day of the, when all the creation will be in distress, even the Prophets of Resolve will not dare take themselves close to Allah ta'ala, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will fall in prostration before Allah under the Great Throne and praise Him. This will pacify the anger of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. There the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will enjoy a position unique privilege in that Allah will permit him to intercede with Him, and He will accept his intercession. Being placed on that exalted position everyone even the most prominent Prophets like Ibrahim will need him.

These different opinions and explanations of the *Muqaam-e Mahmood* may easily be reconciled. These in fact are the expressions of the same thing. This station may at once be of the Great Intercession, a position of envy, a position evoking praise and appreciation from the entire

creation. It may, likewise, be a station under the Great Throne; and everyone may need him.

In sum, this humble anthology of my papers touching upon different prominent aspects of the Seerah is being presented to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The readers are requested to give their company to this sinful author during this blessed spiritual journey, and walking along me with the same feelings of love, utmost respect and reverence which prompted me to undertake the nice task of writing the present book, reach the grand Court of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Last but not the least, since any human effort could not be faultless, present work, too, may not be an exception. Should the readers notice any fault of any kind of commission and immission, they are earnestly requested to communicate it directly to the author. May Allah grant you all the best of reward.

Akhtar Imam Adil Qasmi

Jamia Rabbani, Manorwa Sharif

Friday, Zil- Qada 26, 1436 AH,

corresponding to September 11, 2015

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CHAPTER ONE

ROLE MODEL FOR HUMANITY

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

Indeed in the Messenger of Allâh (Muhammad SAW) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allâh and the Last Day and remembers Allâh much. (al- Ahzaab (33):21)

Why should we study the Seerah?

For the guidance of the human beings Allah ta'ala sent numerous pure- hearted people to the world who devoted their lives for the sake of Allah's good pleasure through man- making and orienting the man towards Islam, the only religion approved by Allah ta'ala. They tried their best to make the Word of Allah prevail and spared no effort to raise the religion of Islam and disseminate its message far and wide. Muhammad Rasoolul Allah (PBUH) stands at the other way of this golden chain of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah. His advent took place in the blackest phase of the human history, when disbelief, along with all of its abominations, held the reins of power. Deriding the human world as the property of the forces of evil, and mocking the Revelatory Teachings brought to the world by the Prophets and Messengers of Allah, disbelief and a total indifference towards Allah the Creator had long been reigning supreme on this earthly planet. As the Final Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (PBUH) faced all alone the combined forces of evil and , under Divine guidance, was eventually able to stem the tide of disbelief and satanism just in a matter of years. He illumined the world, defeated the thick darkness, and the Satan was forced to leave the land of the Arabia for ever in complete dispaire.

The Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is our highly valuable asset

Undeniably, we hold dear all the memories associated with the Noble Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). They constitute the most precious asset of life. Mere imagination of those impressions is able to lit the

inner recesses of a believer's life beyond extinguishing even by the mightier gusts of untrue and falsehood. This deep psychological fact apart, we need to examine ourselves what kind of spiritual benefit we normally draw from our study of Seerah. Is this activity meaningful to us? Or is restricted to mere drawing historical pleasure from the life accounts of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)? Does it hold any good for the present-day Muslim Ummah other than being a sweet story of the past bereft of any character to revolutionise our lives?. Despite all this apathy and a lack of seriousness towards the real message of the study of the Seerah, it is indeed gratifying that Muslims have great love and deeper attachment with the Seerah and they study it with purely religious sentiments, and the ever- developing, anti- faith philosophies and currents have not succeeded yet to extinguish their hereditary undercurrents of faith in Islam and their love of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The unfortunate aspect of our apathy towards Seerah, however, being that we, like others claiming no faith at all in Islam or their love towards the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), are getting used to study the Seerah just for the sake of historical pleasure. We do cast a glance at the history of our past, but not to learn a lesson of revolution from it. We must come to realize the fact studying the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a student of history holds little good for the community of Muslims. Our splendid and proudable past and the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) must serve the purpose of the mirror for us. This, therefore, has to be the only *raison detre* of all of our interests in the study of

Seerah and the Islamic history. It is the history of the past which may tell us our shortcomings, thereby enabling us rid ourselves of them as soon as possible. It may light the innermost darker recesses of us. The Qur'an's philosophy of history determines the same purpose of studying the history. The Qur'an makes frequent references to the past but without caring for an historical order or indulging in things not related to its primary concern of delivering a warning. It always seeks to deliver admonitory lessons from the events of the past instead. To quote its own words:

"So, take warning, then, O those with eyes (to see)". (Al- Hashr 59:2)

In sum, unless the believer takes to study the past history with the Qur'anic vision, he could draw no benefit from the vast history of the past, nor could ever be called a sincere and conscious student of the human history.

"I, whose voice holds the undertones of the
fire of the bygone days,
My entire life stands for nothing except
searching for the missing ones.

In order to construct a safer future a conscious nation can never afford to neglect its past. It shall invariably be required to study its past and critically examine its present so that it is able to carve out a better future for its coming generations. Without seeking light from the past all constructive efforts of the present are doomed to failure. So because they, in most cases, will be without the 'blood' of the inmost. This precious thing,

admittedly, comes out only of the warning drawn from a conscious, purposeful, sustained study of the history.

The Prophet's inalienable concern for his Ummah

Did we ever take notice of the fact which has been reported by a number of the Companions that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), more often, seemed to be preoccupied with deep concern and sorrow. Did we the 'lovers' of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) ever think of the fact why he remained so engrossed in so deep a concern for his Ummah which prompted Allah ta'ala Himself to interfere with the matter and asked him why he was so disheartened at the spectacle of disbelief a section of the people was displaying in the face of his tireless call to Allah.

Thou wouldst only, perchance, fret thyself to death, following after them, in grief, if they believe not in this Message. (Al-Kahf, 18:6)

The Prophet's agonizing concern for and his restless attention to the welfare and the religious well-being of his Ummah directly descended from his overwhelming love and affection he had in the depth of his pure heart. The spectacles of the wretchedness and misery of the Ummah had put him at extreme unease. The same condition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has been depicted by the Qur'an in the following words:

Verily, there has come unto you a Messenger (Muhammad SAW) from amongst yourselves (i.e. whom you know well). It grieves him that you should receive any injury or

difficulty. He (Muhammad SAW) is anxious over you (to be rightly guided, to repent to Allâh, and beg Him to pardon and forgive your sins, in order that you may enter Paradise and be saved from the punishment of the Hell-fire), for the believers (he SAW is) full of pity, kind, and merciful. (al-Taubah, 9:128)

His affection and love was not specific to a particular people; his kindness was common to one and all. He was raised as the Prophet of Peace and Mercy towards the entire mankind, present and future till the advent of the Day of Judgment. The following Qur'anic verse establishes it beyond doubt:

And We have sent you (O Muhammad SAW) not but as a mercy for the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinns and all that exists) (Al-Anbiya :107)

This affection and love was so deep-seated in him which remained inalienable to him till he breathed his last. At times this deep concern got so high that Allah ta'ala Himself interfered and sent the Ruhul- Amin to solace him. The following report speaks of the same truth:

Abdullah bin Amr bin Aas reported that at an occasion the Holy Prophet (PBUH) recited two Qur'anic verses with reference to the Prophets Ibrahim and Isa (Jesus) (Peace be upon them both). They are as follows:

"O my Lord! They have indeed led astray many among mankind. But whoso follows me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeys

me, - still You are indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Ibrahim, 14:36)

"If You punish them, they are Your slaves, and if You forgive them, verily You, only You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise[]". "(al-Maidah, 5:118)

Moved by their love and affection towards their communities, the Holy Prophet(PBUH) raised his hands in prayer and burst into weeping. Allah ta'ala Himself commanded the Arch Angel, Jibril, to visit the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and ask him why he was so upset and what made him weep. Allah Himself is in perfect knowledge of all things, still the reason of his weeping was asked through the intermediary of the Jibril as a mark of respect to him. The great Angel reported his agonizing anxiety about the fate of his Ummah. Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala set the angel back with the message that Allah ta'ala will please you regarding your Ummah, and will not displease you. (Suyuti Jalalud Din: Jamiul Ahadith)

Acts of the Ummah are produced before the Prophet (PBUH)

This concern of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) still persists even after his departure from this world. There are ahadith which suggest that the acts of the Ummah are placed before their respective Prophets. The deeds of virtue please them, while the deeds of disobedience towards Allah ta'ala displease them very much. Anas(may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to have said:

"Acts (of the Ummah) are placed before Allah ta'ala on Mondays and Thursdays. Before the Prophets and the fathers and mothers they are placed on Fridays. They feel good and happy at the virtuous deeds of their children and the whiteness and freshness of their faces get increased. So, fear Allah and do not put at unease your departed souls. "

There is another report from the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which specifically mentions the placing of the acts before the Holy Prophet himself. To cite it here:

Abu Zar (may Allah be pleased with him) reported the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to have said:"The acts of my Ummah were placed before me, both virtuous and the wicked. In the list of the good acts I found even the removing of the injurious things from the way. In like manner, in the list of the bad acts I found even as minor as spitting in the Masjid and leaving it unburied. "(Bukhari Muhammad bin Ismail, al- Adabul - Mufrad, vol. 1, p. 90, hadith no. 230)

Overburdened with care and concern for his Ummah, the Prophet (PBUH) would often kept himself engaged with praying Allah for the religious well-being of the Muslims. The thought of his Ummah's success both herein and in the Hereafter always kept him at extreme unease. According to his thinking, it was his Ummah's success in which lay the success of his own self. He always held the previous one preferable to the latter.

For the sake of his own self he never sought revenge. Except one very special situation, he never hit

anyone else by his sword or any weapon. He issued unequivocal directions to his soldiers never to hit a woman, child, or sick person even in the course of the fiercest conflict. Once a person was wrongly put to sword by a Companion. It angered the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the extreme. Disowning this act, he raised his hands in prayer and said "O Allah! I have nothing to do with this wrong-doing. "

At a point of time as crucial as the Taif event, when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was put to extreme pain, anguish and persecution by the local infidels. The spectacle of the Prophet's extreme misery moved the Heavenly World in the extreme. Allah ta'ala sent the Angels of Mountains and asked his permission to crush to pieces the wrong-doers of Taif by placing them between two mountains. The Prophet of Mercy, however, overlooked and forgave their atrocities they had just committed against him, saying:

"O Allah! forgive my people. They know me not. "(Bukhari, al-Jami al- Sahih al- Mukhtasar vol. 3 p. 1282, hadith no. 3290)

Our Pathetic Indifference

In the face of the Holy Prophet's affection and deep love towards his Ummah our pathetic indifference towards the dissemination of the religion of Islam is very disappointing. The Prophet (PBUH) bore numerous inexplicable hardships and underwent all types trials and tribulations in order to communicate the Word of Allah to his fellow human beings. With reference to the wellness of the same religion of Islam we are sitting idle today, with

little concern and anxiety for its dissemination. Devoid of the deep concern, we have become indifferent to both his Seerah and the message of Seerah. We have practically disowned the way of the Companions and our great Predecessors. Believing in the high import of the Holy Prophet's deeper concern for the welfare and wellness of the religion of Allah on the earth, they lived a life on the pattern of the Holy Prophet himself. They never looked back even in the face of the seemingly undefeatable hardships. Neither the lack of the worldly meanse nor the abundance of the riches could prevent them from lying down their lives for the sake of Islam. With the message of Islam and truth they roamed around the world and left no corner of the globe unvisited purely for the good of the religion of Allah and delivering the message of Islam far and wide. The following poetic lines speak of truth of the Muslims of those times.

*Not to speak of the landmasses,
We spared no wsterbodies without stepping up.
We entered even the Atlanta, driving our horses.*

This deep concern and the revolutionary spirit, which are essentially part of our traditional legacy, now have suffered a decay under the heavy burden of the worldly rites and rituals. Most of our religion now stands reduced to mere lifeless repetition, with no true spirit and understanding. In the past, the same announcement of Allah's divinity and the voice of *la ilaha illa Allah*, if called out in the saharas and inhabited lands, would infuse life even into the barren lands and dry leaves; and if called out in a human habitation, it would bring tumult and revolution. Bilal's *azaan* had put the entire city of Madina at

extreme sentiments bringing the entire population to tears, hue and cry. (Tareekh-e-Dimashq, vol. 7 p. 137)

The things have , nevertheless, now taken a U-turn. Today our ears encounter this enlivening call rousing from our masjids time and again in the course of a single day, yet of no avail. It gives us no spiritual upliftment and fails to bring any tumult of meaning to our hearts and brains. Our this bizarre indifference to the welfare of Islam has been spoken of in the following poetical lines of the Late Iqbal:

Words and meanings are much the same though;

The Azaan of a Mujahid is profoundly different from the one called out by a professional Mulla.

How did it come about? We stii have the Qur'an and the great literature on Seerah and Sunnah amongst us;Islamic history too is still existent to show us the way. Why, then, the Muslims of latter ages lost the most of their spiritual power which our elders and Predecessors had achieved with their sustained efforts ?Why our greatness withered, and did happen to our inner strength and unity which had unified us into an unconquerable force, an object of envy on the part of all other nations and communities of the world?Why the sun of our glory has now sunk which up until the recent past had been at the pinnacle of its rise?Why we are not attracting the help from Allah, the real source of our power and strength, now while our predecessors were able to get a much greater share of it ? The fault lies with us and never with Allah's generosity. Things may get a better turn even today provided that we are prepared to bring changes into ourselves in lines with the guidance provided to us by

Allah ta'ala and His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Again, the secret of our greatness never lies merely in building great universities and in creating the seats on learning and academic excellence and in developing industries and the centres of manufacturing. It lies in the heightened religious fervour, constructive feelings and the revolutionary spirit which is evident from each and every line of the Holy Qur'an; which had granted a life of sacrifice to the Prophet (PBUH) and his true followers. Alas! today we are lacking in the same precious thing, the source of real life indeed.

*Being Muslims, they enjoyed respect and honour;
And , you stay disgraced by forsaking the Qur'an.*

Real value and purpose of studying the Seerah

The study of the Seerah for a Muslim has no other purpose and value than a reaffirmation of our faith in the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and in the religion of Islam brought by him to the entire mankind. By going through the pages of the Seerah we may rekindle our dormant spirits, thereby reasserting our loyalty to him and his religion, Islam. The study of the Seerah must not be intended to seek historical pleasure. Mere gathering the historical information and satisfying one's quest for knowledge may not be a proper purpose a Muslim might embark upon studying the Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). Such an unsolicitous purpose might be clearly seen as the only motivation for most of the Orientalistic studies into Islam and Seerah. The Orientalists have undertaken sustained studies into different aspects of the Islamic scholarship and the Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). But what kind of

benefit they could they draw from the Seerah except satisfying their thirst for knowledge?

Against all such petty purposes, a true Muslim, by his studies into the Seerah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), intends nothing except to renew his faith and prepare himself to shoulder the responsibility of inviting humanity to the religion of Islam so as to deliver his fellow human beings from darkness to the light of Truth. By so doing, not just we may again attract the mercy of Allah to ourselves, regain our lost glory, we may reclaim our splendor of the past as well.

We are with you as long as you are loyal to Muhammad (PBUH)

Not just this world, the Hereafter, even the Pen will turn yours.

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CHAPTER TWO

PROPHET MUHAMMAD : THE PROPHET FOR ALL MANKIND FOR ALL AGES TILL THE END OF THE WORLD'S PRESENT STRUCTURE

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ



And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know.

Muhammad, the Prophet for all Times and Climes

The Prophethood of the Universal Character versus Those of the Limited Character in terms of Their Jurisdiction and the Areas of Operation

Muhammad Rasul Allah is the Final Messenger of Allah and the end-link of the blessed, long Chain of The Prophets stretched over all the ages of the human history. He was preceded by numerous Prophets who properly communicated the same message of Allah to their respective people as did the Prophet Muhammad. The character of the Prophethood of Muhammad and the message brought by him, however, is very much different from those disseminated by Prophets that preceded him. To put it differently, the teachings of the Prophets preceding the Last Prophet pale in comparison to those brought to the humankind from the Creator (SWT) by Muhammad(PBUH) in respect of their comprehensiveness, areas of their applicability and easiness to follow. A comparative study between the two makes it abundantly clear that not just the areas of operation of early Prophets were limited, sometimes restricted to the families and the kinsfolk of the Prophets, but also a much larger part of their teachings was marked by local colour and devoid of the universal appeal. It is the message of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which has a universal appeal beyond all geographical bounds and the time-limits. Amongst the long list of the foregoing Prophets of Allah there are many who have great and enviable accomplishments to their credit, yet they were hardly survived by such faithful and sincere followers who could safeguard their Prophets' legacy and transmit it to the future generations as such.

That is why the major portion of the teachings of the Prophets of past is not in tune with the Revelatory Teachings brought by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This also accounts for the reason why teachings failed to keep abreast of the ever- changing legal, social and economical developments of the human society so much so that even the adherents of those Prophets discarded them with complete disregard. The teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), in sharp contrast, are comprehensive and dynamic, hence capable of meeting the rising challenges of ever- changing human society.

No Prophethood has ever been of the worldwide appeal except Muhammad (PBUH).

As has already been pointed out, notwithstanding the fact that many of the Prophets were of great Resolve and Determination, as have specifically been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, in the long chain of the Prophets of Allah no Prophet was ever granted a message with a universal appeal and character. It is the most outstanding feature of Muhammad Rasul Allah 's Prophethood which contains all the characteristics of a perfect one.

As far as the restricted character of all the earlier Prophethood is concerned, it hardly finds any express mention in the Qur'an. This notion is rather predicated on the statements of those Prophets themselves a student comes across them in the scriptures believed to enshrine the Revelatory teachings. Even the Prophets of the outstanding stature, attributed by the Qur'an to be *Ulul Azm* (Of the Firm Resolve and Inflexible Purpose) have specifically been quoted to be sent to a particular people and that their beneficence was restricted to a particular

nation. The Prophet Moses (AS), for example, is one out of the fewer Prophets held in high veneration by Muslims and other Sematic religious denominations. According to his own statements scattered throughout the Old Testament, his advent was exclusively to the Children of Israel to the exclusion of all other nations of the world. A scholar, however, has reasons to believe that notwithstanding the fact that Moses' advent was restricted both in terms of time and the area of operation, such specifying statements are not from the Moses himself. They are wrongly ascribed to him. Rather, such statements have arisen from the narrow-mindedness of the Jews, who are known to be an audacious and exclusivist nation among the ones blessed with the Revelatory Teachings. The Qur'an, the Last and the only reliable source of Revelatory Teachings now, speaks of a two-fold mission which Moses was assigned by Allah: delivering the Children of Israel from the tormenting slavery of Pharaoh's people and purifying them in the light of the Law of Allah revealed to him ; and communicating the message of *Tauheed*, *Risalah* and the Life-after Death to Pharaoh and his people. Statements of the same restrictive nature have also been attributed to the Prophet Isa (Jesus) as one can easily notice them here and there across the New Testament. Such statements could hardly be proved to be true in their present form. They , too, are the result of the narrow thinking and exclusivist, ethnic and racial considerations of the Christian denomination.

Proclaiming the Universality and never-ending nature of the message and messengership of the Prophet

Muhammad (SAWS) in His eternal scripture, the Qur'an, Allah ta'ala has said :

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَٰكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

And We have not sent you to all mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know. (Saba 34:28).

UNIVERSAL PROPHETHOOD

OUTSTANDING

CHARACTERISTICS

Man needs the light of his past experience to brighten his present and future. And, as I told you earlier, all the different segments of humanity which have done anything to make this world a better place to live in deserve our gratitude; but, the most deserving of our regard are those whom we call the prophets of God. Each one of them has, in his own time, presented a winsome example of his sublime conduct and moral behaviour. If one was a model of endurance, others were emblems of selflessness, sacrifice, fervour for Truth and Oneness of God, submission to the Will of the Lord, chastity and piety, in short, each of them was a lighthouse of guidance showing the path of exalted behaviour in one or the other walk of life everyman has to tread in his sojourn on the earth. Man, however, stood in the need of another guide who could illuminate the entire gamut of human behaviour, in all its manifoldness, by his comprehensive example of goodness and virtue. Man, in other words, needed a perfect and universal exemplar who could place in his hands a guide-book of practical life, so that every wayfarer may reach his destination safely. And, this exemplary did come to the world in the person of the last of the prophets, Muhammad (SAW), on whom be peace and blessing of the Lord.

The Qurān announced this gospel truth in these words:

“O Prophet! Lo! We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and, as a lamp that gives light.”¹

He is the prophet well-informed, the witness to God’s commandments, the bringer of glad tidings, the warner unto those who are heedless, the summoner of the erring to the way of God, the resplendent light which dispels the darkness and shows the right path. Every prophet of God came to this world as a witness, or a harbinger of good tidings, or as a warner, or as a summoner, but never in the past there came a prophet who combined all these qualities in his single being. There were witnesses to God’s majesty and overlordship like Jacob, Isaac and Ishmael. Others like Abraham and Jesus were the heralds of glad tidings. There were also warners like Noah, Moses, Hüd and Shuyeb, the key-note of whose forebodings were terrible punishment awaiting the evildoers. Then, there were the prophets like Joseph and Jonah whose teachings set the tone for summonses to divine guidance. But the messenger par excellence who had all these marks of prophet hood- a witness as well as a welcome, warner as well as a caller- and who was a distinguished Messenger in every respect was none else save Muhammad (SAW). He was sent to the world as the last prophet, the final one after whom no other messenger was to be sent again by God. This is the reason why he was granted as shariat or the law that was perfect and final requiring no revision in the days to come.

¹ Q. XXXIII: 45-46

Since the teachings of the last Prophet were to be ever-abiding, to remain unchanged to the end of time, he was sent as an acme of perfection with ever- blooming guidance and resplendent light. This is an indisputable fact attested by the pages of history. A character held Out as an ideal or model for humanity needs must fulfill certain conditions before such a claim can be universally accepted. The first and foremost test to which the character of such a guide should be put is historicity.

Historicity means that the genuineness of the accounts of life and character of any man put forth as a perfect exemplar should proceed not from any fable or a legendary tale, but from reputed sources and methodical records of what we call as history. Man is never disposed, by his frame of mind, to be deeply impressed by any happening, event or biography which he knows to be fictitious. For a lasting impression of any character, one needs the assurance that every detail of the life, saying and doing of such a personality is perfectly genuine and verifiable. Historical stories have, for that very reason, a greater appeal than the works of fiction. Another reason for the historicity of a character, particularly if it is intended to impart a lesson to others, is that no bed-time fable, told to while away the hours of leisure, can be deemed to hold up a model for emulation or following its example. For nobody can be expected to follow a mythical or imaginary character, it is absolutely essential that the journal of a life presented as an emblem of virtuous human conduct should be perfectly authentic in accordance with the criterion set for acceptance of any event as historical.

We hold all the prophets of God in reverence and pay homage to them. We also agree that every one of them was a truthful messenger of divine guidance but the Lord has Himself told us that :-

“Of these messengers, some of whom We have caused to excel others. ²

We believe that this was the honour granted to Muhammad (SAW) since he was the last of the line of prophets, bearer of the final and ever-abiding message of God and, thus, he was sent as a standard of virtue and goodness for the guidance of mankind to the end of time. No other prophet than he was intended to be the seal of the Divine messengers; nor were the teachings of any other prophet to last till the Doomsday. They were all sent as models, teachers and guides, no doubt; but for a particular age and people, and hence, whatever they had thought gradually vanished from the memory of humanity.

Now, let us think it over again. How many Messengers were sent by god to this world, to all the nations and countries? Their numbers must run into hundreds of thousands. Be that as it may, Islamic traditions put the figure at one hundred and twenty-four thousand although the Qur'an tells us the names of a few only. But, even of those whose names we know, how little of their life and character is known to the world? Although there are no means to verify it, the Hindus claim that theirs was the oldest civilization of the world. Their sacred writings mention innumerable sages, but is there

² Q. II:253.

one to be put forth as a historical personality? There are many amongst these saints and sages about whom nothing except their names are known to us; there are others who can be treated as mythological personalities rather than characters belonging to the realm of history. More detailed knowledge of the noble personages described in the _____ and Rāniyanā are undoubtedly available, but can their lives be tested on the touchstone of history? Nobody knows the age, or the era, or the century, or the year, or period when they lived. Certain European orientalists have, of late, hazarded their opinion when these sages would have been living, but this is the only evidence available about their historicity. A majority of these experts do not even regard them as historical and deny that the mythological personalities described in these books were ever born on this earth.

Zoroaster, the founder of ancient Iranian faith named after him, is still revered by a large number of people, but his historical personality is also hidden behind the mist of obscurity. Several skeptical orientalists of Europe and America have doubts if a man with this name ever lived in this world. Even the scholars who accept Zoroaster's historical existence, have succeeded in giving, through guess-work, some paltry details about his life. These accounts are so contradictory that no reasonable standard of practical human life can be based on them. Where was Zoroaster born, what was the year, what was his nationality or family, what was the religion he preached, whether the scripture attributed to him is genuine, what was the language spoken by him, when and where he died- each of these questions have elicited a

hundred contradictory answers since no authentic and dependable records about him are available to clear the mist of doubt and uncertainty shrouding Zoroaster's personality. The Zoroastrians, or the Parsees, as they are known nowadays, lack acknowledged traditions about their Master and have to depend on the researches of European scholars for answering these questions. Their national sources do not go beyond Firdaus's Shāhnāma. It is hardly, an excuse that the Greek invaders of Iran had destroyed their scriptures; the point is that they exist no more. The very fact of their destruction settles the issue that the teachings of Zoroaster, whatever they had been, were not meant to be ever-abiding. This, by the way, is the reason why orientalists like Kern and Darmeteter refuse to accept Zoroaster as a historical figure.

Another religion of ancient Asia was Buddhism which was once the dominant faith of the people of India, China, the whole of Central Asia, Afghanistan and Turkistan and is still a living faith in Burma, Indo-China, China, Japan and Tibet. It was exterminated in India by Brahmanism and replaced by Islam in the Central Asia, but the power it commanded in South-Asia still sustains its faith and culture. Nevertheless, has its continued existence in several countries succeeded in preserving the dependable annals of Buddha's life and work? The age when the Buddha lived is calculated with reference to the time of Rājas of Magadh, which, in turn, is fixed by the chance discovery of diplomatic relations that these rulers had established with the Greeks. We have even more scant details about the life of Confucius, the founder of China's Confucianism, although the number of its adherents is still

reported to be more than ten millions. Semites have had hundreds of prophets; nevertheless, history knows hardly anything about most of them except their names. Only a few incidents about the lives of Noah, Abraham, Sālih, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, Zachariah and John are known to posterity. All the important links transmitting the details of their lives and doings are missing from the chain of history. How, then, the incomplete, disjointed accounts of the lives of these patriarchs can serve as beacons of guidance to humanity today? Barring the description of their morals and conduct given in the Quran, all that is told about them in the Jewish Scriptures is held to be spurious by competent scholars. Even if we were to ignore these criticisms, only a dim and incomplete picture of these men of God emerges from the Jewish writings.

Torah³ is the chief source of information about Moses, but if the experts and authors of Encyclopedia Britannica are to be believed, the Scripture extant today was written hundreds of years after the death of Moses. Some German scholars even claim to have discovered a two-fold tradition on which the Torah is based for it carries the inconsistencies of its original sources. The learned discourse on this issue can be seen in the article included under the heading "Bible" in the latest addition of the Encyclopedia.⁴ If these criticism of the scholars are deemed to be correct, as they are generally accepted, what

³ Torah is the Hebrew word for "the Pentateuch".

⁴ 11th Edition of Encyclopedia Britannica.

historical validity can be claimed for the records of other events prior to Moses?

Gospels are the records of the life of Jesus Christ. The Christian world, however, accepts only four of them and rejects others, like the Gospels of Thomas and Barnabas, as apocryphal. However, not one of the writers of these four 'authentic' Gospels ever saw Jesus. Nothing is known about the sources on which these Gospels are based. Doubts have been raised whether the Gospels bearing the names of their authors were actually written by them. Even the time and language of the original Gospels are uncertain. Biblical scholars hold the view that the four extant Gospels were compiled from various sources from about 60 A. D. onwards. In regard to these dubious elements as well as the stories of birth and death of Jesus and the doctrine of Trinity, certain critics have expressed the view- as discussed recently by a famous Chicago Journal in its several issues- that the story of Christ is purely fictitious, adopted from Greek and Roman myths containing similar stories of birth, death and resurrection of some pagan gods. The researches into the origin of the Gospels show how puzzling and insufficient is the evidence to rediscover the Jesus of history.

That any human being should be set up as a perennial guide for man, it is most essential to have the entire life of that model before us. No incident, no part of the life of such a shining example should remain in the dark. Like an open book it should be known inside out so that humanity may be able to make out how far that life can serve as an ideal guide and teacher.

Viewed from this angle, none of the preachers and founders of the religions would stand the test of historicity except the Prophet of Islam. The uniqueness of Muhammad (SAW) in this regard furnishes yet another testimony to the fact that he alone was sent down to this world as the seal of prophets. Only three or four of the founders of religions, as earlier stated by us, can at best be put forth as historical characters, but not all of them can claim that everything about their life and character is known to the world. Buddhists form today about one-fourth of the world's population, but all that we know of the life of Buddha consists of a mixture of fables and folklores. If we were to make a search for the missing links of his life, we would decidedly be unsuccessful in our quest. All that we can glean from the stories known about him is that a certain chieftain in the foothills of the Himalayas, south of Nepal, had a son who was endowed with a thoughtful disposition. After he had grown to manhood and become father of a child, he happened to see certain persons afflicted with misery. He was so shocked by the sufferings and decay manifest in all earthly things around him that he left his hearth and home to discover a higher and more enduring meaning in life and human destiny. He wandered all over the land— Varanasi, Pātliputra and Rajgir— sometimes he roamed in the cities, at others rambled over the mountains and forests, and ultimately reached Gaya, where, sitting under a Buddhist tree, he made the claim of having attained enlightenment. Thereafter, he went about expounding his discovery from Varanasi to Bihar and then left this fleetest arid. This is, in fine, the sum total of our knowledge about the Buddha.

Zoroaster was also the founder of a faith. But nothing save surmises and injectors about his life is the knowledge possessed by the world today. Rather an recounting the fictions about him we would better direct our attention to the resume of findings by an expert given in the Encyclopedia Britannica in an article bearing his name.

“The person of the Zoroaster whom we meet with in these hymns (of Gāthās) differs to-to coelo from the Zoroaster of the younger Avesta. He is the exact opposite of the miraculous personage of a later legend.”⁵

After giving a description of the Gāthā, the writer continues:

“Yet we must not expect too much from the Gathas in the way of definite details. They give no historical account of the life and teaching of their prophet. but rather are, so to say, versus memorials, which recapitulate the main points of interest, often again in brief outlines.”⁶

Again, as to the birth place of Zoroaster, the writer goes on to say:

“As to his birth place, the testimonies are conflicting.”⁷

⁵ Encyclopedia Britannica (11th Edition), 1910-11, Vol. XXVIII, p. 1042.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

No consensus of opinion exists about the time of Zoroaster, which is hotly disputed by Greek historians as well as modern authorities. The writer of the article reaches the conclusion that —

“Agathies remarks (ii-24), with perfect truth, that it is no longer possible to determine with any certainty when he lived and legislated.”⁸

All we know about Zoroaster is that he was born somewhere in Azarbaijan, preached his religion around Balkh, converted King Vistaspa to his faith, worked certain miracles, married and had a few children, and then died somewhere. Can anybody lay a claim that a person about whom our information is so limited and paltry is a well-known personality, fit to be put forth as a guiding star for humanity?

Moses is the most celebrated among the prophets of old. Let us leave aside the question relating to the authenticity of Torah, as it exists at present, and assume that its five books contain a correctly dependable account of its author. But, what do they tell us? The life story of this great Prophet told by the Torah can be summed up in a few sentences. Moses is brought up by an Egyptian princess in the palace of Pharaoh. After he comes of age, he helps the oppressed Bani Israel on one or two occasions and then he takes flight to Median, where he marries and returns to Egypt again after a long period of exile. On his way back, mantle of prophet hood falls upon him, he goes to the court of Pharaoh, works certain miracles and demands the emancipation of the enslaved Hebrews. He

⁸ Ibid.

takes the advantage of a dark night to flee with his people from Egypt; Pharaoh leads the hordes of warriors and chariots thundering after Bani Israel; the sea gives way to Moses and his followers; but the watery walls surge back over the pursuing Egyptians. Moses takes his people to Arabia, and thence to Syria, fights the unbelieving folk living there and ultimately meets his death, on a hill, after he has grown quite old. Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Torah, then describes the journey's end of Moses in the concluding paragraphs.

"So, Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-poor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.⁹ And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Lord knew face to face.

"¹⁰

All the five books of Torah, the last of which is Deuteronomy, are believed to have been written by Moses himself. But, the few sentences cited above suggest, on the first glance, that the book of Deuteronomy, or at least its concluding portion, could have never been written by Moses. Nobody knows the name of Moses' biographer.

Similarly the words: 'no man knows his sepulcher unto this day' and 'there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses' clearly indicate that the Book must have

⁹ Deut. 34:5-7.

¹⁰ Deut. 34:10.

been written after a fairly long time when people had lost traces of such an important monument as the grave of their greatest benefactor, or, I would be that the whole nation had forgotten all about Moses in the glimmering: of a new redeemer expected by them.

“Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died,” says the e Deuteronomy, but how little do we know of the events of his long life? Only few sketchy and disjointed events of Moses’ life, like his birth, migration to Median, marriage and early period of ministry and exodus have been related by us biographer. He is then seen taking part in a few battles but makes his exit to enter the scene again when he has grown quite old. Let us wean our thought from the ups and downs of Moses life for every man has to undergo a chapter accidents which are peculiar in each case, but we do need to know about the€ morals and conduct, demeanor and behaviour of a guide and leader of mankind These very essential details of the life of Moses form the missing links of history, however. Old Testament is replete with such trivialities as the ancestral lineage of its characters, population of the Hebrews at different periods and places and their rites and customs. Howsoever important these details may be for the study of the Holy Land’s geography and chronology, genealogy and sociology, but they are hardly of any practical utility for compilation of the biography of a religious guide like Moses. This deficiency makes the characterization of Moses incomplete.

The Messenger of God nearest in time to the Prophet of Islam was Jesus Christ whose followers today outnumber the votaries of every other religion. Strange

though it may seem, but it is a hard fact that the particulars of the life of this Prophet available today are the most meager in comparison to the founders of all other religions. The keen interest taken by the Christendom in the study of ancient civilizations, archaeological excavations and deciphering of ancient writings has shed a flood-light on the distant past of Babylon, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Africa, India and Turkistan and succeeded in rewriting not a few lost pages of the ancient history; yet, if it has failed anywhere to recover the missing pieces of the eternal landscape of the past, it is the sealed book of its own savior's life story. Earnest Renan left no stone unturned to recreate the *Vie de Jesus*¹¹ but, as everybody knows, his effort proved fruitless. The New Testament tells us that Jesus Christ died at the age of thirty-three but it records the events of the last three years of his life only.¹² Even this is either not supported by sufficient evidence or has been proved to be dubious by

¹¹ Published in 1863.

¹² In 1906, Albert Schweitzer, a philosopher and theologian, published his monumental work, entitled *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* in which he surveyed the whole enterprise from the earliest time to his day. This is how he began his final chapter: 'There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the life of Jesus. ' Another scholar, Rev. Dr. Charles Anderson Scot says in his article on Jesus Christ written for the 14th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*: The attempt to write a 'Life of Jesus' should frankly be abandoned. The material for it certainly does not exist. It has been calculated that the total number of days of his life regarding which we have any record does not exceed 50. ' (Vol. VIII, pp. 16. 17)

good evidence to the contrary. The only information we have about the historical Jesus is that he was brought to Egypt after his birth, worked a few miracles during his childhood; but then he quits the scene to reappear at the age of thirty, baptizing and preaching the gospel to fishermen in the mountains beside the sea of Galilee. He gathers a handful of followers, has a few discussions about the Law with the priests and elders, is got arrested by the Jews and produced before Pontius Pilate, is ultimately crucified and his sepulcher is found vacant on the third day. Nobody knows where Jesus remained or what he did during the twenty-five years of his life's duration. And, of the happenings narrated about his last three years, what else is there except a few parables, miracles and crucifixion?

A biography to be ideal must also be comprehensive. In other words, whatever light and guidance people need in different walks of life- for fulfillment of their duties, redeeming the pledges, being fair and just and virtuous- should be had from the life of the ideal personage. Viewed from this angle, one would have to concede that only the life of the Prophet of Islam conforms to this standard. What is religion, after all? It is nothing save a means to unfold the relationship, on the one hand, between man and his Master, and, on the other, between man and man. Religion is, thus, meant to teach us the obligations we owe to God and our rights and duties with reference to our fellow beings; and, hence, it becomes a bounden duty of the follower of every religion to find out what light the life of his prophet or founder of religion sheds on these questions. From this standpoint,

however, one would not find complete guidance anywhere save in the life of Muhammad (SAW) the last Prophet of God.

Religions are of two kinds. One, the religions like Buddhism and Jainism which are agnostic, denying the existence of God. It would, therefore, be futile to look for the awareness of God's nature and attributes or the tender regard and adoration for god and His Omnipotence and Unicity in the life of the precursors of these religions. The others are theistic faiths which acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being in one form or the other, but the lives of their founders breathe little of their devotion to God. The portraits of their lives do not pretend to be shadows of divine perfection, nor do they tell us explicitly about their quest for God or their beliefs and convictions. Go through the Old Testament and you would find quite a few references to the Oneness of God, His commandments and the rules for offering oblations unto God, but hardly a sentence describing the feeling of awe and gratitude to God, spiritual exaltation and a living awareness of the Supreme Being experienced by Moses. Had the religion of Moses been the last and abiding principle of divine guidance, its followers must have preserved the aids to spiritual elevation; but they failed to do so, perhaps, as designed by Providence.

Gospels are the mirrors of Christ's life. They tell us that God is the Father of Jesus, but what obligation the son owed to his Father and how he answered this call of duty? The son declares the great love of the Father for him, but how much did the son love his heavenly Father? How he obeyed. His commands, how he paid Him divine

honours, how he bowed and humbled himself to show his reverence and whether he asked the Father to grant him anything else save the day's bread? We do not know whether Jesus spent his nights in prayers and vigils except the one before his betrayal and arrest. What spiritual enlightenment and inspiration can we draw from a prophet like him? Had the gospelists clearly portrayed the picture of communion between Jesus Christ and God instead of spinning myths around him, the first Christian Emperor would not have had to convene the Nicene Council, after 325 years of the birth of Christ, to draw up a statement of Christian creed which remains an inexplicable riddle to this day.

Turning to the rights and duties of human beings, we again fail to find any clear exposition of this important matter in the life of any prophet or founder of religion except the life of Muhammad (SAW). Gautama Buddha left his home and family, severing all connections from his loving wife and innocent son, to discover the meaning of human destiny in the solitude of the woods. He said good-bye to his friends and abandoned the responsibility of administration in order to find the peace of Nirva by overcoming the desire arising out of his will-to-live. Now, one can ask what message does the teaching of the Buddha contain for the common man, for the rulers and the ruled, for the rich and the poor, for the master and the servant; and how does it provide guidance in the discharge of one's obligations as a father, as a son, or as a brother, sister or friend? Are the teachings of the Buddha comprehensive enough to be followed by the ascetics and businessmen alike? His teachings were, in point of fact, never acted

upon by the working classes, else the administration in the countries like China, Japan, Siam, Tibet and Burma would have long gone to winds; trade, industry and business would have come to a standstill; and the populous cities would have turned into woodlands.

Moses was an illustrious leader of men; noted commanding the Hebrew hordes in the battlefields. He could thus be a model in the case of a call to arms, but has he left any precedent to be followed in the discharge of one's rights and duties and fulfillment of one's obligations to others? How he wanted the wife and the husband, the father and the son, brothers and friends to behave towards one another; what his custom was in making peace with his adversaries; how he spent his wealth for the benefit of the sick and the poor, the orphan and the way-farers? Moses was married, had children as well as a brother, relatives and friends, and we believe, as an Messenger of God, his behaviour towards them would have been exemplary. But we are at a loss to find any guidance in these matters from the books of Scripture attributed to him!

Jesus Christ had his mother and, as the Bible tells us, he had brothers and sisters and ever his earthly father, although he was born of a virgin mother. Nevertheless, the story of his life told in the Gospels keeps mum about his behaviour towards his kith and kin. Social relationship has been, and shall ever remain, the pivot of civilised existence, and hence every religion must seek to regulate it. But, what is there in the life of Jesus Christ to offer guidance in these matters? He belonged to a subject race ruled by an alien power. How could he, then, set any

example for the rulers and administrators? He did not marry, and hence his life has nothing to guide the spouses whose relationship of love and affection has been spoken of in the very first chapter of the Old Testament. Furthermore, since an overwhelming portion of world's population leads a married life, Jesus' life would come amiss to offer any guidance to them. Verily, Jesus can never be the ideal guide of humanity for he ever remained indifferent to his relatives, had nothing to do with earning and spending, war and peace and friends and foes. These very mundane affairs, unfortunately, form the hub of our earthly life. Were this world to follow the example of Jesus, all progress will be suspended and the silence of the grave would descend over the world. Christian Europe would, then, die a natural death.

Yet another determinant of an ideal life is its practicality- a decisive test for a founder of religion or law-giver; since, the preacher of a canon and system of belief should be able to lead the way by his personal example of living up to his precepts. His actions, in other words, should demonstrate the feasibility of his teachings.

Anybody can enunciate any number of fanciful notions, attractive concepts and appealing philosophies, but not everyone can live up to them. Innocent and fine maxims are no proof of one's virtuous character it rather consists of following the narrow, straight path of unblemished rectitude. Were it not so, it would be difficult to distinguish between vice and virtue, good and bad and the world would then abound in agreeable chatters. Now, let us judge the founders of religions by this acid test.

"But I say unto you which hear," said Jesus Christ, "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth you on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away the cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of you; and of him that taketh away the goods ask them not again."¹³ Jesus also taught that one should forgive one's brother's misdemeanour not only seven times but "seventy times seven"¹⁴ and that "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."¹⁵ Many more glamorous sayings of Jesus and other sermonizers can be cited here but none can be treated as a wholesome moral precept unless it is also accompanied by a practical example of the preacher. These would be merely sparkling gifts of the gab rather than examples of practical conduct. How can one forgive his enemies unless he has first subdued them? What does charity, benevolence and philanthropy of a man mean, if he is not blessed with anything to spare? Just as the man who has not married and has no children and relations cannot be held forth as an ideal husband, or a loving father, or a gracious kinsman; how can one be taken as a model of mercy, kindness and forgiveness if one had never had an Opportunity to pardon anybody?

Virtues are of two kinds: one is positive and the other negative. Living like an anchorite in the far off cave

¹³ Luke 6:27-30.

¹⁴ Mt. 18:22.

¹⁵ Mt. 19:23.

can, at the most, be reckoned as a negative virtue for the ascetics merely abstain from doing harm to others. But, what about the positive side of their actions? Do they help the poor, feed the hungry, raise the fallen or guide the erring? Forgiveness, zeal to restore truth and justice and fulfillment of one's obligations are some of the cardinal virtues requiring positive action. Virtues are, of a fact, more often positive than negative.

It would now be clear that there could be no "ideal life" — to be followed by others_ unless its positive and practical aspect is also before us. How can we follow the example of any guide, if it is not illustrated? We want precedents for waging war and making peace, for leading our lives in affluence and poverty, for living as married couples and celibates, for our union with God and social relationship with our fellow beings. In victory and defeat, in anger and forbearance, in loneliness and Companionship, in short, in every situation of life marked by vicissitudes of our earthly existence we need an exemplar to show us the right path. We require practical exemplary to those who have successfully met these situations and hit upon a solution rather than those who have nothing to offer except sweet words. It is neither the poet's fancy nor the flower of speech, but an indisputable fact of history that no other life save that of Muhammad (SAW), the last Prophet of God, answers the test of practicality.

To recapitulate the essential ingredients of an ideal life, discussed afore, let me repeat that historicity, comprehensiveness, perfection and practicality are necessary for any character to be followed by others. I do

not mean to say that other prophets lacked these qualities, but I do assert that the record of their lives and doings preserved by their followers and handed down to us throw no light on these aspects of their character. This was in conformity with the will of God, perhaps, as it constitutes, in itself, an intrinsic evidence that the prophets of yore were sent to their own peoples and for their own times. Their biographies were not preserved because posterity did not need them. It was only Muhammad (SAW), the last of the prophets who was sent by God for all the nations, as a shining example, to be followed by the entire humanity until the Day of Judgment. His biography, the record of his sayings and doings, had thus to be perdurable and ever blooming, and this is the greatest testimony, a practical attestation of the finality of Muhammad's (SAW) prophet hood.

“Muhammad (SAW) is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah is Aware of all things.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Q. XXXIII:40.

Allah ta'ala did not call the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by his name

As a matter of fact, it is the good qualities of man which attract praise for him. It is the good qualities which make a man lovelier with the people. More good qualities and nobler morality, the lovelier his personality. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was invested by Allah with so higher qualities of a perfect human being that were never shared by any other person, including the Prophets of Allah. This unique and unequalled position won him the most loving status in the eyes of the world. To Allah his place is so high that in the entire Qir'an he has not been addressed by his name even once. Each time he has been addressed by one of his good qualities. Other Prophets, contrariwise, have been addressed by their names. To cite some references here just to illustrate the point:

And We said: "O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the Paradise. (Al- Baqarah:35)

Moses was addressed as:

"And what is that in your right hand, O Moses?"(Taha:17)

David was addressed as:

O David! We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth. (Saad:26)

JoZachariah was addressed as:

(Allâh said) "O Zakariya (Zachariah)! Verily, We give you the glad tidings of a son, His name will be Yahya. (Maryam:7)

Yahya was addressed by his name as:

Yahya! take hold of the Book with might"(Maryam:12)

Isa (Jesus) was addressed by his name as:

Behold! Allah said: "O Jesus! I will take you and raise you to Myself. (Ale -Imran:55)

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) , on the other hand, throughout the Qur'an has invariably been addressed either as Prophet, Messenger or by other appellations, *muzammil*, *muddathir*, etc.

To cite some examples:

O Messenger! proclaim the (message) which has been sent to you from your Lord. (al-Maida:67)

Even the city of Makka, the birthplace of Muhammad (PBUH) and his residence, is so dear to Allah ta'ala that in His Book, the Qur'an, He has taken oath with reference to it:

I swear by this city (Makkah);

And you are rendered violable in this city (Makkah). (al- Balad:1, 2)

Once a delegation of Bani Tamim visited Madina to meet the Holy Prophet (PBUH), who was in his house. Unaware of the manners and how to conduct themselves before the Holy Prophet (PBUH), they began to shout 'O Muhammad! come out to meet us'. Their calling him out by his name in such a rude way was disliked by Allah ta'ala and He expressed His like by revealing the following verse:

"Those who shout out to you from without the inner apartments - most of them lack understanding.

If only they had patience until you could come out to them, it would be best for them: but Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
(49:4, 5)

A special feature of 'Muhammad' as his proper name Unlike the names of other Prophets and Messengers which indicate to their physical features, Muhammad is indicative of the perfections of the holder of this name which won him the praise from all over the world. In other words, the names of the Prophets preceding Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are mere names and do not indicate to their respective perfections. The name 'Muhammad', contrariwise, is fully indicative of the fact that he is praiseworthy, thanks to his innate qualities and unequalled position of Messengership.

In sum, each and every aspect of Prophet Muhammad's *Seerah* speaks of the fact that he commands incomparable respect and greatness in the comity of the Prophets of Allah and holds the position of 'belovedness' with Him. The life accounts of him do reveal the vast range of his great favours unto the entire humanity. How great is the favour of Allah unto us that He created us in the Ummah of such a great Messenger. Towards Him we ought to be as much thankful as we are able to. Countless *duroods* and *salams* be upon Muhammad, the Last Prophet of Allah unto the entire mankind till the end of the world. (Here ends the chapter two.)

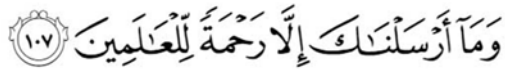
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CHAPTER THREE

WORLDWIDE MERCY THE AGE OF IGNORANCE



And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad],
except as a mercy to the worlds.

**No prophet ever came to be the mercy for
the entire creation.**

Prophet Muhammad (SAWs) the only one raised as Mercy for all the worlds

The last Messenger of Allah, Muhammad bin Abdullah was preceded by thousands of the messengers of Allah with the same message to humanity. However, in many respects the last messenger of Allah stands alone, and hardly there is any prophet (PBUT) to share his special qualities. The distinctive qualities and the highest moal standards the last Prophet (SAWS) was born with never no human being combined in his single person in the entire human history. His being and his advent as the Final Messenger of Allah is doubtlessly the greatest good of Allah towards the entire humanity. The entire world and each and every individual creature, there for, must feel immensely indebted to Allah taala and His final Messenger.

Selection of Muhammad bin Abdullah as Mercy for Mankind

The Great Creator did favou him with so many higher human qualities and noblest moral traits. The most outstanding quality Allah ta'ala bestowed upon His last messenger (SAWS), however, is his being as raised to be mercy for mankind. This quality has been so beneficial for the entire humanity which stands absolutely unique and distinctive. Out of the entire humanity, the Lord of all the worlds chose Muhammad for this unmatchably great position and invested him with the qualities needed for it. If there has been *rahmatul-lil-alam* in the entire history of mankind, it would be safe to claim that there has never been a person in the history of mankind with those distinct

features, perfections, his noble teachings, directives, revolutionary accomplishments which bear a relationship with his attribute of being Rahmatul-lil-Alamin and which brought to the human world highly constructive revolution and unprecedented felicity. For this purpose the study of his character shall deem more useful with respect to the following references:

- Moral characteristics of Rahmatul-lil-alamin.
- His teachings and reforms and areas of their reflection especially with respect to the animals other than human beings.
- His deep sympathy with the weaker sections of mankind.
- Special mercy towards Muslims.
- Enemy too received as much share of his all embracing mercy and compassion. (Note No. 4 of Al-Quran. Insaf Ka Meyar.)

Religious Conditions

Great religions of the world had spread the light of faith, morals and learning in the ages past, but every one of these had been rendered a disgrace to its name by the sixth century of the Christian era. Crafty innovators, unscrupulous dissemblers and impious priests and preachers had, with the passage of time, so completely distorted the scriptures and disfigured the teachings and commandments of their own religions that it was almost impossible to recall the original shape and content of these religions. Could the founder or the prophet of any one of them have returned to earth, he would unquestionably

have refused to own his own religion and denounced its followers as apostates and idolaters.

Judasim had, by then, been reduced to an amalgam of dead rituals and sacraments without any spark of life left in it. Also, being a religions upholding racial snoberry, it has never had any message for other nations or the good of the humanity at large.

It had not even remained firmly wedded to its belief in the unicity of God (which had once been its distinguishing featur and had raised its adherents to a level higher than that of the followers of ancient polytheistic cults), as commanded by the Prophet Abraham to his sons and grandson Jacob. The Jews had, under the influence of other powerful neighbours and conquerors, adopted numerous idolatrous beliefs and practices as acknowledged by modern Jewish authorities :

"The thunderings of the Prophets against idolatry show, however, that the cults of the deities were deeply rooted in the heart of the Israelitish people, and they do not appear to have been thoroughly suppressed until after the return from the Babylonian exile... Through mysticism and magic many polytheistic ideas and customs again found their way among the people, and the Talmud

confirms the fact that idolatrous worship is seductive."¹⁷

The Babylonian Gemara¹⁸ (popular during the sixth century and often even preferred to Torah by the orthodox Jewry) typically illustrates the crudeness of the sixth century Jews' intellectual and religious understanding by its jocular and imprudent remarks about God and many an absurd and outrageous beliefs and ideas which lack not only sensibility but are also inconsistent with the Jewish faith in monotheism.¹⁹

Christianity had fallen a prey, in its very infancy, to the misguided fervour of its overzealous evangelists, unwarranted interpretation of its tenets by ignorant church fathers and iconolatry of its gentile converts to Christianity. How the doctrine of Trinity came to have the first claim to the Christian dogma by the close of the fourth century has been thus described in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*.

"It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as

¹⁷ Ludwig Blan, Ph. D., Prof. of Jewish Theological Seminary, Budapest, Hungary, in the article on 'Worship' in *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XII, pp. 568-69.

¹⁸ Talmud is the body of Jewish law and legend comprising the Mishnah (precepts of the elders codified c. 200 A.D.) and the Gemara is a commentary on the Mishnah (in recension, at Jerusalem c. 400 and at Babylon c. 500)

¹⁹ For details see Dr. Rohling's *Jews in the Light of Talmud*. Arabic version *Al-Kanz al-Marsud fi Qawaid al-Talmud* by Dr. Yusuf Hina.

well as other, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette. Two things have happened. There is the reocognition on the part of exgetes and Biblical theologians, including a contantly growing number of Roman Catholics, that one should not speak of Trinitatianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely, parallel recognition on the part of historians of dogma and systematic theologians that when one does speak of an unqualified Trinistarianism, one has moved from the period of Chritian origins to, say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thouroughly assimilated into Chritian life and thought."²⁰

Tracing the origin of pagan customs, rites, festivals and religious services of the pagans in Christianity, another historian of the Christian Church gives a graphic account of the persistent endeavour of early Christians to ape the idolatrous nations. Rev. James Houston Baxter, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St. Andrews, writes in. *The History of Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*:

²⁰*The New Catholic Encyclopaedia*(1967) art."The Holy Trinity" Vol. 14.P. 265.

"If paganism had been destroyed, it was less through annihilation than through absorption. Almost all that was pagan was carried over to survive under a Christian name. Deprived of demi-gods and heroes, men easily and half consciously invested a local martyr with their attributes and labelled the local statues with his name, transferring to him the cult and mythology associated with the pagan deity. Before the century was over, the martyr-cult was universal, and beginning had been made of that imposition of a deified human being between God and man which, on the one hand, had been the consequence of Arianism, and was on the other, the origin of so much that is a typical of medieval piety and practice. Pagan festivals were adopted and renamed; by 400, Christmas Day, the ancient festival of the sun, was transformed into the birthday of Jesus."²¹

By the time sixth century reared its head, the antagonism between Christians of Syria, Iraq and Egypt on the question of human and divine natures of Christ had set them at one another's throat. The Conflict had virtually turned every Christian seminary, church and home into a hostile camp, each anathematising the other and thirsting

²¹The history of *Christianity in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, Glasgow, 1929, Chap. Church 312-800 A.D., P. 407.

after its adversary's blood. 'Men debated with fury upon shadows or shades of belief and staked their lives on the most immaterial issues',²² as if these differences meant a confrontation between two antagonistic religions or nations. The Christians were, thus, neither inclined nor had time to set their own house in order and smother the ever-increasing viciousness in the world for the salvation of humanity.

In Iran, from the earliest times, the Magi worshipped four elements²³ (of which fire was the chief object of devotion) in the oratories, or fire-temples, for which they had evolved a whole mass of intricate rituals and commandments. In actual practice, the popular religion included nothing save the worship of fire and adoration of *Hvare-khshaeta* or the Shining Sun. Certain rituals performed in a place of worship were all that their religion demanded, for after performing these rites they were free to live as they desired. There was nothing to distinguish a Magi from an unconscientious, perfidious fellow.²⁴

"It was incumbent on the civil servants to offer prayers four times a day to the sun besides fire and water. Separate hymns were prescribed for rising and going to sleep, taking bath, putting on the sacred cord, eating

²² Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the Last Thirty years of the Roman Dominion*, Oxford (1902) pp. 44-45

²³ These elements were light, water, earth and wind.

²⁴ A Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, Paris, 1936, (Urdu translation by Prof. Muhammad Iqbal, *Iran ba-Ahd-i-Sasaniyan*) P. 155.

and drinking, sniffing, hair-dressing, cutting of the nails, excrement and lighting the candle which were to be recited on each occasion with the greatest care. It was the duty of the priests to compound, purify and tend the sacred fire which was never to be extinguished, nor water was ever allowed to touch fire. No metals was allowed to rust, for metals, too, were hallowed by their religion."²⁵

All prayers were performed facing the sacred fire. The last Iranian Emperor, Yazdagird III, once took an oath, saying: "I swear by sun, which is the greatest of all gods". He had ordered that those who had abjured Christianity to re-enter their original faith should publicly worship the sun in order to prove that sincerity.²⁶ The Principle of dualism, the two rival spirits of good and evil, had been upheld by the Iranians for such a long time that it had become a mark and symbol of their national creed. They believed that *Ormuzd* creates everything good and *Ahriman* creates all that is bad; these two are perpetually at war and the one or the other gains the upper hand alternately.²⁷ The Zoroastrian legends described by the historians of religion bear remarkable resemblance to the heirarchy of gods and goddesses and the fabulousness of Hindua and Greek mythology.²⁸

²⁵*Ibid*, pp. 186-7

²⁶*Ibid*.

²⁷*Ibid*., pp. 183-233

²⁸*Ibid*., pp. 204 and 209

Buddhism, extending from India to Central Asia, had been converted into an idolatrous faith. Wherever the Buddhists went, they took the idols of the Buddha with them and installed them there.²⁹ Although the entire religious and cultural life of the Buddhists is overshadowed by idolatry, the students of religion have grave doubts whether the Buddha was a nihilist or he believed in the existence of God. They are surprised how this religion could at all sustain itself in the absence of any faith or conviction in the Primal Being.

In the sixth century A.D. Hindustan had shot ahead of every other religion in the number of gods and goddesses. During this period 33 million gods were worshipped by the Hindus. The tendency to regard everything which could do harm; or good as an object of personal devotion was at its height and this had given a great encouragement to stone sculpture with novel motifs of decorative ornamentation.³⁰

Describing the religious condition of India during the reign of Harsha (606-648), a little before the time when Islam made its debut in Arabia, a Hindu historian, C.V. Vaidya, writes in his *History of Medieval Hindu India*.

"Both, Hinduism and Buddhism were equally idolatrous at this time. If any thing, Buddhism perhaps beat the former in its intense idolatry. That religion started, indeed, with the denial of God, but ended by making

²⁹IshwarTopa, *HindutaniTamaddun*, Hyderabad (N.D.) p. 209 and JawaharLal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, pp. 201-2

³⁰ See R.C. Dutt, *Ancient, India Vol III*, P. 276

Buddha' himself the Supreme God. Later developments of Buddhism added other gods like the Bodhistvas and the idolatry of Buddhism especially in the Mahayana school was firmly established. It flourished in and out of India so much that the word for an idol in the Arabic ³¹ has come to be Buddha itself."³²

C.V. Vaidya further says :

"No doubt Idolatry was at this time rampant all over the world. From the Atlantic to the Pacific the world was immersed in idolatry; Christianity, Semitism, Hinduism and Buddhism, vying, so to speak, one with another in their adoration of Idol.³³

Another historian of Hinduism expresses the same opinion about the great passion for multiplicity of deities among the Hindus in the sixth century. He writes :

"The process of deification did not stop here. Lesser gods and goddesses and goddesses were added in ever growing numbers till there was a crowd of deities, many of them adopted from the more primitive peoples who were admitted to Hinduism with the gods

³¹ But, however, stands for idol in Persian and Urdu and not in Arabic language.

³² C.V. Vaidya, *History of Mediaeval Hindu India*, Vol. I, Poona (1924), p. 101.

³³ History of Ancient India. Vol. I, p. 101

whom they worshipped. The total number of deities is said to be 33 crores, i.e. 330 millions, which, like the phrase, 'Thy name is legion', merely implies an innumerable host. In many parts of the country the minor gods receive as much or even more reverence than the major god."³⁴

The Arabs had been the followers of Abrahamic religion in the olden times and had the honour of having the first House of God in their land, but the distance of time from the great patriarchs and prophets of yore and their isolation in the arid deserts of the peninsula had given rise to an abominable idolatry closely approximating the Hindu zeal for idol worship in the sixth century A.D. In associating partners to God they were not behind any other polytheistic people. Having faith in the companionship of lesser gods with the Supreme Being in the direction and governance of the universe, they held the belief that their deities possessed the power to do them good or harm, to give them life or death. Idolatry in Arabia had reached its lowest ebb; every region and every clan or rather every house had a separate deity of its own.³⁵

Three hundred and sixty idols had been installed within the Ka'ba and its courtyard³⁶, the house built by Abraham for the worship of the One and only God. The Arabs actually paid divine honours not merely to

³⁴L.S.S. O'Malley, *popular Hinduism-The Religion of the Masses, Cambridge* (1935) pp. 6-7.

³⁵*Kitab-ul-Asnam* by Ibn al-Kalabi, p. 33

³⁶Bukhari, *Kitab-ul-Maghazi, Chap. Conquest of Mecca*

sculptured idol but venerated all types of stones and fetish: angles, jinn and stars were all their deities. They believed that the angels were daughters of God and the jinn His partners in divinity,³⁷ and thus both enjoyed supernatural powers whose mollification was essential for their well-being.

Social and Moral Conditions

This was the plight of great religions sent by God, from time to time, for the guidance of humanity. In the civilised countries, there were powerful governments and great centres of arts and culture and learning but their religions had been garbled so completely that nothing of their original spirit and content was left in them. Nor were there any reformers or heavenly-minded guide of humanity to be found anywhere.

Byzantine Empire

Crushed under vexatious and burdensome taxes levied by the Byzantine Empire,³⁸ the allegiance to any alien ruler was considered by the populace as less oppressive than the rule of Byzantium. Insurrections and revolts had become such a common features that in 532 A.D. the public discontent voiced most dramatically in Constantinole by the *Nika* (win or conquer) revolt took a

³⁷*Kitab-ul-Asnam*, p. 44

³⁸ The Eastern Roman or Byzantine empire, which was known to the Arabs as Rum, hed, with its capita at constantinople, Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, all the island in the Mediterranean Sea, Egypt, all the coastlands in North Africa during the period. It came into existence in 395 A.D. and ended with the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453.

toll of 30,000 lives.³⁹ The only pastime of the chiefs and nobles was to squeeze wealth, on different pretexts, from the harassed peasantry, and squander it on their pleasure and amusement. Their craze for merriment and revelry very often reached the depths of hideous savagery.

The authors of the *Civilisation, Past and Present* have painted a lurid picture of the contradictory passions of the Byzantine society for religious experience as well as its love for sports and recreation marked by moral corruption.

"Byzantine social life was marked by tremendous contrasts. The religious attitude was deeply ingrained in the popular mind. Asceticism and monasticism were widespread throughout the empire, and to an extraordinary degree even the most commonplace individual seemed to take a vital interest in the deepest theological discussion, while all the people were much affected by a religious mysticism in their daily life. But, in contrast, the same people were exceptionally fond of all types of amusements. The great Hippodrome, seating 80,000 wide-eyed spectators, was the scene of hotly disputed chariot races which split the entire populace into rival factions of 'Blue' and 'Green'..... The Byzantines possessed both the love of beauty of and streak of

³⁹*Historians History of the World*, Vol. VII, p. 73

cruelty and viciousness. Their sports were often bloody and sadistic, their tortures were horrible, and the lives of their aristocracy were a mixture of luxury, intrigue, and studied vice."⁴⁰

Egypt had vast resources of corn and shipping on which Constantinople largely depended for its prosperity, but the whole machinery of the imperial government in that province was directed to the sole purpose of wringing profits out of the ruled for the rulers. In religious matters, too, the policy of suppressing the Jacobite heresy was pursued relentlessly.⁴¹ In short, Egypt was like a milch-cow whose masters were interested only in milching her without providing any fodder to her.

Syria, another fair domination of the Byzantine Empire, was always treated as a hunting ground for the imperiousness and expansionist policy of the imperial government. Syrians were treated as slaves, at the mercy of their masters, for they could never pretend to have any claim to a king or considerate behaviour upon their rulers. The taxes levied were so excessive in amount and so unjust in incidence that the Syrians had very often to sell their children for clearing the government dues. Unwarranted persecution, confiscation of property, enslavement and impressed labour were some of the common features of the Byzantine rule.⁴²

⁴⁰ T. Walter Wallbank and Alastair M. Taylor, *Civilisation, Past and Present* (Scott, Foresman & Co. 1954), pp. 261-62.

⁴¹ *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, pp. 32, 42 and 46

⁴² Kurd Ali, *Khutat Sham*, Vol. I, p.101

The Persian Empire

Zoroastrianism is the oldest religion of Iran. Zarathushtra, the founder of Zoroastrianism, lived probably about 600-650 B.C. The Persian empire, after it had shaken off the Hellenistic influence, was larger in size and greater in wealth and splendour than the Eastern Roman or Byzantine empire. Ardhashir I, the architect of Sasanian dynasty, laid the foundation of his kingdom by defeating Artbanus V in 224 A.D. In its heyday of glory the Sasanid Empire extended over Assyria, Khozistan, Media, Fars (Persis), Adharbayjan Tabaristan (Mazandaran), Saraksh, Marjan, Marv, Balkh (Bacteria), Saghd (Sagdonia), Sijistan (Saeastene), Hirat, Khurasan, Khwarizm (Khiva), Iraq and Yemen, and for a time, had under its control the areas lying near the delta of the river Sind, Cutch, Kathiawar, Malwa and few other districts.

Ctesiphon (Madain), the capital of the Sasanids, combined a number of cities on either banks of the Tigris. During the fifth century and thereafter the Sasanid empire was known for its magnificence and splendour, cultural refinement and the life of ease and rounds of pleasure enjoyed by its nobility.

Zoroastrianism was founded, from the earliet times, on the concept of universal struggle between the *ahurds* and the *daevds*, the forces of the good and the evil. In the third century Mani appeared on the scene as a reformer of Zoroastrianism. Sapor I (240-271) at first embraced the precepts uttered by the innovator, remained faithful to them for ten years and then returned to Mazdaism. The Manichaeism was based on a most thorough-going dualism of the two conflicting souls in

man, one good and the other evil. In order, therefore, to get rid of the latter, preached Mani, one should practise strict asceticism and abstain from women. Mani spent a number of years in exile and returned to Iran after the accession of Bahram I to the throne, but was arrested, convicted of heresy, and beheaded. His converts must have remained faithful to his teachings, for we know that Manichaeism continued to influence Iranian thought and society for a long time even after the death of Mani.⁴³

Mazdak, the son of Baudad, was born at Nishapur in the fifth century. He also believed in the twin principle of light and darkness, but in order to put down the vile emanating from darkness, he preached community of women and goods, which all men should share equally, as they do water, fire and wind. Mazdakites soon gained enough influence, thanks to the support of Emperor Kavadh, to cause a communistic upheaval in the country. The rowdy element got liberty to take forcible possession of wives and property of other citizens. In an ancient manuscript known as *Namah Tinsar* the ravages done to the Iranian society by the application of communistic version of Mazdaism have been graphically depicted as under :

"Chastity and manners were cast to the dogs. They came to the fore who had neither nobility nor character, nor acted uprightly, nor had any ancestral property; utterly indifferent to their families and the nation, they had no trade or calling; and being

⁴³*Iran ba 'Ahd-i-Sasaniyan*, pp. 233-269

completely heartless they were ever willing to get into mischief, to mince the truth, vilify and malign others; for this was the only profession they knew for achieving wealth and fame."⁴⁴

Arthur Christensen concludes in Irān under the Sasanids:

"The result was that the peasants rose into revolt in many places, bandits started reaking into the houses of nobles to prey upon their property and to abduct their womenfolk. Gangsters took over the possession of landed estates and gradually the agricultural holdings became depopulated since the new owners knew nothing about the cultivation of land."⁴⁵

Ancient Irān had always had a strange proclivity to subscribe to the extremist calls and radical movements, since, it has ever been under the influence of irreconcilable political and religious concepts. It has often been swinging, as if by action and reaction, between epicureanism and strict celibacy; and, at others, either yielded passively to despotic feudalism and kingship and preposterous priesthood, or drifted to the other extreme of unruly and licentious communism; but has always missed that

⁴⁴Namah Tinsar, Tabe Maynwi, P.13 (Quoted from *Iran Ba Ahd-i-Sasaniyan*, P. 477)

⁴⁵ *Iran Ba Ahd-i-Sasaniyan*, p. 477

moderate, poised and even temper which is so vital for a healthy and wholesome society.

Towards the end of the Sāsāniyan Empire, during the sixth century, all civil and military power was concentrated in the hands of the Emperors who were alienated from the people by an impassable barrier. They regarded themselves as the descendants of celestial gods; Khosrau Parviz or Chosroes II had lavished upon himself this grandiose surname: "The Immortal soul among the gods, and Peerless God among human beings; Glorious is whose name, Dawning with the sunrise and Light of the dark-eyed night."⁴⁶

The entire wealth of the country and its resources belonged to the Emperor. The kingš, grandees and nobles were obsessed with amassing wealth and treasure, costly gems and curios; were interested only in raising their own standard of living and luxuriating in mirth and merriment to an extent that it is now difficult for us to understand their craze for fun and festivity. He can alone visualize their dizzy rounds of riotous living who has studied the history, literature and poetry of the ancient Iran and is also well informed about the splendour of Ctesiphon, *Aiwan-i-Kisra*⁴⁷ and *Bahar-i-Kisra*,⁴⁸ tiara of the emperors,

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 604

⁴⁷ White palace of Chosroes. For details see Ibn al-Ahd-i-Sasaniyan

⁴⁸ Carpet of Silk, sixty cubits in length and as many in breadth; a paradise or garden was depicted on it, the flowers, fruits, and shrubs were imitated by the figures of golden embroidery and the colours of the precious stones; and the ample square was enriched by a variegated and verdant border.

the awe-striking court ceremonials, the number of queens and concubines, slaves,cooks and bearers, pet birds and beasts owned by the emperors andtheir trainers and all.⁴⁹ The life of ease and comfort led by thekings and nobles of Persia can be judged from the wayYazdagird III fled from Ctesiphonafter its capture by the Arabs. He had with him, during his flight, one thousand cooks, onethousand singers and musicians, and one thousand trainers of leopards and a thousand attendants of eagles besides innumerable parasites and hangers-on but the Emperor still felt miserable for not having enough of them to enliven his drooping spirits.⁵⁰

The common peopl were, on the other hand, extremely poor and in great distress. The uncertainty of the tariff on which each man had to pay various taxes gave a pretext to the collectors of taxes for exorbitant exactions. Impressed labour, burdensome levies and conscription in the army as footman, without the inducemeñt of pay or any other reward, had compelled a large number of peasants to give up their fields and take refuge in the service of temples or monasterie.⁵¹ In their bloody wars with the Byzantines, which seemed to be never ending and without any interest or profit to the common man, the Persian kings had beeñ plying their subjects as a cannon fodder.⁵²

⁴⁹ShahinMikarios, *Tarikh Iran*, (1898), p. 98

⁵⁰ *Iran baAhdSasaniyan*, pp. 681 and 685

⁵¹ShahinMikarios : *Tarikh Iran*, p. 98

⁵² *Iran Ba Ahd-i-Sasaniyan*, Chap V

India

The remarkable achievement of the ancient India in the fields of Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine and Philosophy had earned her a lasting fame but the historians are agreed that the era of her social, moral, and religious degradation commenced from the opening decades of the sixth century.⁵³ For shameless and revoking acts of sexual wantonness were: consecrated by religion, even the temples had degenerated into cesspools of corruption.⁵⁴ Woman had lost her honour and respect in the society and so had the values attached to her chastity. It was not unoften that the husband losing in a game of chance dealt out even his wife.⁵⁵ The honour of the family, especially in higher classes claiming a noble descent, demanded that the widow should burn herself alive with the funeral pyre of her, dead husband. The custom, upheld by society as the supreme act of fealty on the part of a widow to her late husband,⁵⁶ was so deep-rooted that it could be completely suppressed only after the establishment of the British rule in India.

India left behind her neighbours, or, rather every other country of the world, in evolving an inflexible and callously inhuman stratification of its society based on social inequality. This system which excluded the original inhabitants of the country as exteriors or outcastes, was formulated to ensure the superiority of conquering Aryans and was invested with an aura of divine origin by the

⁵³R.C. Dutt, *Ancient India*, Vol. III

⁵⁴Dayanand Saraswati, *Satyarth Prakash*, P. 344

⁵⁵ See *Mahabharat*

⁵⁶ Bernier, F. *Travels*, Edited By Constable, 2 Vols. ed. 1914

Brahmins. It canalised every aspect of the people's daily life according to heredity and occupation of different classes and was backed by religious and social laws set forth by the religious teachers and legislators. Its comprehensive code of life was applicable to the entire society, dividing it into four distinct classes:

- (1) The *Brahmins* or priests enjoying the monopoly of performing religious rites;
- (2) The *Kshatriyas* or nobles and warriors supposed to govern the country;
- (3) The *Vaisyas* or merchants, peasants and artisans; and
- (4) The *Sudras* or the non-Aryan serfs meant to serve the first three castes.

The *Sudras* or the *dasas* meaning slaves. (forming a majority in the population), believed to have been born from the feet of Brahma, formed the most degraded class which had sunk socially to the lowest level. Nothing was more honourable for a Sudra, according to the *Manu Shastra*, than to serve the Brahmins and other higher castes.

The social laws accorded the Brahmin class distinctive privileges and an honoured place in society. "A Brahmin who remembers the *Rig Veda*", says the *Manu Shastra*, "is absolutely sinless, even if he debases all the three worlds." Neither any tax could be imposed on a Brahmin, nor he could be executed for any crime. The *Sudras*, on the contrary, could never acquire any property, nor retain any assets. Not allowed to sit near a Brahmin or

touch him, the Sudras were not permitted to read the sacred scriptures.⁵⁷

India was drying up and losing her vitality. Divided into numerous petty states, struggling for supremacy amongst them, the whole country had been given to lawlessness, maladministration and tyranny. The country had, furthermore, severed itself from the rest of the world and retired into her shell. Her fixed beliefs and the growing rigidity of her iniquitous social structure, norms, rites and customs had made her mind rigid and static. Its parochial outlook and prejudices of blood, race and colour carried within it the seeds of destruction. Vidya Dhar Mahajan, formerly Professor of History in the Punjab University College, writes about the state of affairs in India on the eve of Muslim conquest:

“The people of India were living in isolation from the rest of the world. They were so much contented with themselves that they did not bother about what was happening outside their frontiers. Their ignorance of the developments outside their country put them in a very weak position. It also created a sense of stagnation among them. There was decay on all sides. There was not much life in the literature of the period. Architecture, painting and fine arts were also adversely affected. Indian society had become static and caste system had become very rigid. There was no

⁵⁷ For details see the Manu Shastra Chap. 1,2,8 & 11

re-marriage of widows and restrictions with regard to food and drink became very rigid. The untouchables were forced to live outside the towns."⁵⁸

Arabia

The idea of virtue, of morals, was unknown to the ancient Bedouin. Extremely fond of wine and gambling, he was hardhearted enough to bury alive his own daughter. Pillage of caravans and cold-blooded murder for paltry gains were the typical method to still the demands of the nomad. The Bedouin maiden, enjoyed no social status, could be bartered away like other exchangeable goods or cattle or be inherited by the deceased's heir. There were certain foods reserved for men which could not be taken by women. A man could have as many wives as he liked and could dispose of his children if he had not enough means to provide for their sustenance.⁵⁹

The Bedouin was bound by unbreakable bonds of fidelity to his family, blood relations and, finally, to the tribe. Fights and forays were his sport and murder a trifling affair. A minor incident sometimes gave rise to a sanguine and long-drawn warfare between two powerful tribes. Often these wars were prolonged to as many as

⁵⁸VidyaDhar. Mahajan : Muslim Rule in India, Delhi, 1970, p. 33

⁵⁹ See the Quran, the books of Hadith and the poetical collections on Ashar Arab like Hamasah, Saba Muallaqat, etc.

forty years in which thousands of tribesmen came to a violent end.⁶⁰

Europe

At the beginning of the Middle Ages the torch of knowledge flickered dimly and artistic achievements of the classical past seemed destined to be lost for ever under the young and vigorous Germanic races which had risen to political power in the northern and western parts of Europe.⁶¹ The new rulers found neither pleasure nor honour in the philosophy, literature and arts of the nations outside their frontiers and appeared to be as filthy as their minds were filled with superstition. Their monks and clergymen, passing their lives in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing) before the ghastly phantoms of their delirious brains⁶² were abhorrent to the company of human beings. They still debated the point whether a woman had the soul of a human being or of a beast, or was she blessed with a finite or infinite spirit. She could neither acquire nor inherit any property nor 'had the right to sell or transfer the same.

Robert Briffault writes in the *Making of Humanity* "From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay under a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more lawful and horrible than that, of the

⁶⁰ Details can be seen in the poetical collections of pre-Islamic era and the books on Akhbār-i-Arab

⁶¹ Frank Thilly, *History of Philosophy*, New York, 1945, pp 155-58

⁶² Leckey, W.E.H, *History of European Morals*, London, 1930, Part II, P.46

primitive savage for it was the decomposing body of what had once, been a great civilisation. The features and impress of that civilisation were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, e.g. in Italy and Gaul, all was ruin, squalor and dissolution.⁶³

The Era of Darkness and Depression

The sixth century in which the Prophet of Islam was born was, to be brief, the darkest era of the human history : it was the most depressing period in which the crestfallen humanity had abandoned all hopes of its revival and renaissance. This is the conclusion drawn by noted historian, H.G. Wells, who recapitulates the condition of the world at the time when Sasanid and Byzantine Empires had worn themselves out to a death-like weariness :

"Science and Political Philosophy seemed dead now in both these warring and decaying Empires. The last philosophers of Athens, until their suppression, preserved the texts of the great literature of the past with an infinite reverence and want of understanding. But there remained no class of men in the world, no free gentlemen with bold and independent habits of thought, to carry on the tradition of frank statement and enquiry embodied in these writings. The social and political chaos accounts largely for the disappearance of this

⁶³ Robert Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, p. 164.

class, but there was also another reason why the human intelligence was sterile and feverish during this age. In both Persia and Byzantium it was an age of intolerance. Both Empires were religious empires in a new way, in a way that greatly hampered the free activities of the human mind."⁶⁴

The same writer, after describing the events leading to the onslaught of the Sasanids on Byzantium and eventual victory of the latter, throws light on the depth of social and moral degradation to which both these great nations had fallen, in the following words :

"A prophetic amateur of history surveying the world in the opening of the seventh century might have concluded very reasonably that it was only a question of a few centuries before the whole of Europe and Asia fell under Mongolian domination. There were no signs of order or union in Western Europe, and the Byzantine and Persian Empires were manifestly bent upon a mutual destruction. India also was divided and wasted."⁶⁵

Worldwide Chaos

To be brief, the entire human race seemed to have betaken itself to the steep and shortest route to self-destruction. Man had forgotten his Master, and had thus become oblivious of his own self, his future and his

⁶⁴ H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, London, 1924, p. 140.

⁶⁵ H.G. Wells, *A Short History of the World*, London, 1924, p. 144.

destiny. He had lost the sense to draw a distinction between vice and virtue, good and bad; it seemed as if something had slipped through his mind and heart, but he did not know what it was. He had neither any interest nor time to apply his mind to the questions like faith and hereafter. He had his hands too full to spare even a moment for what constituted the nourishment of his inner self and spirit, ultimate redemption or deliverance from sin, service to humanity and restoration of his own moral health. This was the time when not a single man could be found in a whole country who seemed to be anxious about his faith, who worshipped the One and only Lord of the world without associating partners to Him or who appeared to be sincerely worried about the darkening future of humanity. This was the situation then obtaining in the world, so graphically depicted by God in the Qur'an:

"Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Q.30:41.

MERCY OF THE WORLD

*"We sent thee not save as a mercy for the worlds."*⁶⁷

In the preceding pages a shorter description has been given of the world existing at the time of the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). In such incomparably critical phase of the human history when the world was passing through a state of hysterics at the close of the sixth century of the Christian era. The entire human race had, it seems, taken a pledge to commit suicide. God has portrayed, in the Qur'an, the condition then obtaining in the world so graphically that no artist can draw such a true to life picture of the then situation.

"And remember Allah's favour unto you; how you were enemies and He made friendship between your hearts so that ye became as brothers by His grace; and (how) you were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, and He did save you from it."⁶⁸

If our historians and literatures have not been able to preserve the heart-rending account of the pagan past, they need not be blamed for it because limitations of human language and forms of expression would not have

⁶⁷ Q. 21 : 107.

⁶⁸ Q.3 : 103. This chapter, summing up the great benefits flowing from the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), which have changed the destiny of human race, has been taken from the concluding part of a speech delivered by the author on the occasion of Birth Anniversary of the holy Prophet.

allowed them to capture in words the dreadful situation of the then world. The shape of things was so horrible, so critical, that not the best word painter could have succeeded in its faithful depiction. How could have any historian drawn a picture of that horrible situation? Did the Age of Ignorance merely means moral corruption of the Arabs or a few other nations? Did it merely pose the problem of idolatry, depravity and decadence or else self indulgence, inequity and exploitation of the poor, or, criminal behaviour of the then stronger nations? Was it simply the question of the burial of innocent new-born daughters by their heartless fathers? It was all this and much more. It was as though the 'mother' earth wanted to swallow up its entire progeny. There are hardly words to describe the terrifying conditions through which the whole world was passing in those days. Only those can understand it who had themselves lived in that horrible age.

It was thus not a problem confronting any single nation or country but the destiny of the whole human race was at stake, if any artist capable of converting a vision into eternity were to paint the portrait of a good-looking young man in a fine fettle, a soul shining through its crystal covering, and could somehow show him to be the vicegerent of God on earth who was bent on taking a leap in a lake of fire and brimstone, then he would perhaps succeed in portraying the situation thus depicted in the Qur'an : (How) you were upon the brink of an abyss of fire, He did save you from it." The holy Prophet has also illustrated this critical situation through a simile. He says, "The mission and guidance I have been vouchsafed to

deliver to this world is like this : 'A man made a bonfire, and when it illuminated the surrounding, insects began to jump into it. You also want to take a leap into the fire in a like manner, but I am holding you by your waists to save you from falling into the eternal fire.'⁶⁹

The whole problem was how to lead the caravan of humanity to its safe destination. All the social and developmental endeavours, educational and literary efforts were possible only after man had been brought back to a normal, sensible frame of mind. There is the least doubt that the greatest good the prophets have done to the humanity consists of saving it from the unknown, imminent dangers threatening to destroy it from time to time. No literature or philosophy, reformatory or constructive effort, not even the survival of man on this planet could have been possible without the merciful endeavours of the prophets of God. But, so ungrateful is man that he has announced with the flourish of trumpets, time and again, that the prophets of God had had their time, and that the world no longer needed them. Its seers and guides have repeatedly declared that the prophets had nothing new to offer, no benefits to confer on humanity. Man has, in this way, really deposed over and over again against his own right to exist in this world!

When any civilisation becomes over-sophisticated it closes its eyes to the ethical precepts. Man forgets everything save the satisfaction of his desires and replaces his loving, merciful heart by a selfish and ferocious disposition. His covetous greed takes the shape of an

⁶⁹ Mishkat, Bukhari.

aching void which can never be filled in. This is the time when man becomes mad after the world and all that it stands for and, then, the Providence moves to chasten him and to give him his deserts. Poet of the East has given expression to the same truth in one of his verses :

Fever of lunacy then overtakes the kings,
Ferule of God are all, Timur and Chinghiz.

One can replace the words 'king' and 'kingship' by civilization for the insanity of civilization is nowadays much more dangerous and wider in scope than the madness of the kings of old. A single lunatic can make a hell of the life of all the people around him, and, one can very well imagine what would happen if the whole people were to lose their heads.

During the era we speak of as the Age of Ignorance the entire human race had become so depraved, so cruel-hearted that it took pleasure in the suffering of man. This is not poetic imagery but is supported by hard facts of history; man had turned into a demon who was most enthusiastic to witness the death and suffering of his own species. He prized the spectacle of the pangs of death suffered by human beings more than the pleasure he derived from merry-making, eating and drinking.

Gladiatorial sports involving combats between men and wild beasts under the Romans displayed more vividly than any other crime against humanity, the bottomless chasm to which human nature could sink. But this was not a depravity that had captured the imagination of a few guilty conscience. Writing about the immense popularity of these performances, Lecky says in his *History of European Morals* that "the magnificent circus, the gorgeous dresses of

the assembled Court, the contagion of a passionate enthusiasm thrilling almost visibly through the mighty throng, the breathless silence of expectators, the wild cheers bursting simultaneously from eighty thousand tongues, and echoing to the farthest outskirts of the city, the rapid alteration of the fray, the deeds of splendid courage that were manifested were all fitted to entrance the imagination."⁷⁰ The interest and enthusiasm that attended these games of inconceivable atrocity was so intense that special laws were found necessary, and, sometimes proved even insufficient, to check them.

Thus, the beast in man had taken hold of him during the Age of Ignorance. He had, by his deeds, furnished the proof that he had forfeited the right to live in this world, or, rather he had himself lost the very desire to remain in this world any more. Yet, his Lord and Master, the Most Compassionate and the Most Merciful, had decided otherwise. He decided to save the world and the progeny of Adam from death and destruction through the Messenger, who was addressed by Allah in the following eternal phraseology:

"And (O Muhammad) We sent you not save as mercy for the worlds."⁷¹

It is plain as day that the entire duration of the world's existence since the debut of the holy Prophet of Islam stems from his merciful deeds. First of all, he removed the sword of Damocles hanging over the head of humanity by giving it a new ideal to live for and a new

⁷⁰ W:E H. Lecky; History of European Morals, Vol. I, p. 119.

⁷¹ Q. 21:107.

zest and confidence to work for it. A new age of culture and civilization, arts and learning, material and spiritual progress - a new brave world - came into existence through his efforts.

The foremost service of the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) towards mankind

The first and the foremost service that he rendered to the humanity consisted of the faith in the Oneness of God head. No other creed more revolutionary, more life-giving and more profitable could have been vouchsafed to the humanity. Man had been proud and presumptuous, boastful of his creations like philosophy and poetry and the art of government; he took pride in enslaving other countries and nations; often arrogated himself even to the position of God; but he also demeaned himself by bowing his head before inanimate, lifeless objects, things of his own creation, and mountains, rivers, trees and animals; and harboured credulous beliefs and irrational fear of the demons and devils. He spent his life in the fear of the unknown and the hope from non-existent powers which could not but foster mental confusion, cowardice, doubtfulness and indecision in him. The Prophet of Islam made him self-reliant, courageous, rational and undoubting by removing the fear of everything else save that of his real Master and the Lord. It was because of him that man came to recognise his Creator as the Supreme Power, the Enricher and the Destroyer. This new discovery meant a world of change for him as it enabled him to free himself from the shackles of superstitious beliefs, irrational fears, dubiousness and misgivings. He could now see the

unity of cause in the manifoldness of phenomena, was reassured of his pivotal position in the scheme of creation, became aware of his worth and dignity, in short, his acceptance of the command of the One and only God made him the master of every other created being and object. It was, thus, for the first time that man became aware of the exalted position allotted to him by God.

Unity of Godhead came to be recognised, thanks to the last Prophet, as the guiding principle for all the schools of thought, philosophies and creeds. Even polytheistic religions were so powerfully influenced by it that their votaries began to fight shy of their creeds and started putting up constructions to explain away their rites and observances demanding devotion to gods and demigods. The heathen belief in the worship of numerous deities began to suffer from a sense of inferiority from which it has still not recovered. This was the greatest gift bestowed on humanity by the holy Prophet.

The Concept and Practice of Equality and the universal brotherhood of mankind

The second great favour conferred by the Messenger of God on human beings is the concept of equality and universal brotherhood of mankind. The world before him was divided by manifold divisions of castes and creeds, tribes and nations, some claiming ranks of nobility for themselves and condemning others to the position of serfs and chattels. It was for the first time that the world heard the revolutionary message of human equality from the Prophet of Islam.

"O Mankind, Your God is one and you have but one father. You are all progeny of Adam, and Adam was made of clay. Lo! the noblest among you, in the sight of God, is the one who is best in conduct. No Arab has any preference over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab over an Arab save by his piety."⁷²

The Prophet made this declaration on the occasion of his last *haj* before a congregation of one lakh and twenty-four thousand persons. His announcement put the seal on the twin principles of the oneness of God and the Unity of mankind. These are the two natural foundations for raising any edifice of peace and progress, friendship and cooperation between different peoples and nations. They create a twin relationship between human beings - that of One Lord and one father for all of them. Oneness of God is the spiritual principle of human equality just as a common lineage of the high and the low, the white and the coloured races places them on the same place of humanity.

The world was not in a frame of mind to pay heed to the message of equality of human beings when it was first announced by the Prophet of Islam. It was then a radical call, making a clean sweep of the then social relationships and economic and political orders. So striking and revolutionary was this call that it had sent the world into jitters. Today we find the principle of human equality enshrined in the constitutions of different countries and being proclaimed from the forum of the

⁷² Kanz-ul-Ammal.

United Nations Organisation in the shape of the Charter of Human Rights, but it was all due to the pioneering efforts of the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him), Muslim missionaries and reformers, who made indefatigable efforts to establish a truly egalitarian Muslim society. It was this model established through their toil and tears that later on came to be accepted as the standard for human existence in this world. There was a time when numerous clans and families claimed their descent from the sun or the moon. Qur'an quotes the belief then held by the Jews and the Christians in these words : "The Jews and the Christians say : We are the children of God and those whom He loves." ⁷³ The Paraohs of Egypt claimed themselves to be the incarnation of the Sun-god while India had several ruling families which arrogated themselves as the progeny of the sun or the moon. The Emperors of Iran called themselves *Kasra* or Chosroes which meant that Divine blood flowed in their veins, the Last Iranian Emperor was known as Yazdagird owing, chiefly, to the Divine respects paid to him by his subjects.

The Chinese rulers deemed themselves to be the sons of Heaven. They believed that the Heaven was their God, who, with his spouse, the goddess earth had given birth to the human beings and *Pau Ku*, the Chinese Emperor, was the first-born son of Heaven enjoying supernatural powers. The Arabs were so proud of their language that every other nation besides their own was an '*ajmi* or dumb to them. Likewise, the Quraysh of Mecca being extremely conscious of maintaining their superiority,

⁷³ Q. 5 : 18.

claimed a position of privilege even in the performance of *haj*. This was the shape of things all over the world, when the Qur'an proclaimed that all human beings were equal.

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware."⁷⁴

In another Surah, which is the opening chapter of the Qur'an, it was declared that :

"Praise is to Allah the Lord of the Worlds."⁷⁵

The highest standard of Justice Islam enjoined upon Muslims

The Islamic concept of human dignity and excellence over all forms of creation

The fourth great gift and a boon to the humanity bestowed by the Prophet of Islam is the Islamic concept of human dignity. During the Age of Darkness when Islam made its appearance none was so ignoble and humiliated as man. Without any worth, he had absolutely no sense of human dignity. Often trees and animals regarded as sacred, owing to corrupt religious beliefs or traditions, enjoyed a more coveted place than man himself. Human sacrifices at the altar of deities were a common spectacle. It was solely due to Muhammad, the Prophet (peace be upon

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⁷⁵ Q. 1:1.

him), that man came to appreciate the fact that human beings, the glorious creation of God, were entitled to a much more loving regard, respect and honour than any other creature. The rank accorded to man by the holy Prophet was next only to God, for God had Himself heralded the purpose of man's creation in these words of lasting beauty :-

"He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth."⁷⁶

Man was declared as the best of creations, the ruler of the world and all that exists in it.

"Verily We have honoured the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea, and have made provision of good things for them, and have preferred them above many of those whom We created with a marked preferment."⁷⁷

Man had been accustomed to associate nobility with those who claimed themselves to be the progeny of gods and demi-gods. In order that the honour of the common man was not usurped again by the selected few, the Prophet announced:

"The whole of mankind is the family of God and amongst His family the dearest to Him is he , who does good to others."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Q.2 : 29.

⁷⁷ Q.17 : 70.

⁷⁸ Mishkat.

A celestial Tradition of the Prophet alludes to the deep care of God for the welfare of human beings. It says : "God would ask (someone) on the Day of Judgement, 'I was ill but you did not pay a visit to Me!' The man would reply : 'How could have I paid a visit to Thee? Thou art the Lord of the worlds!' But God would say, 'Do you not recollect that one of my slaves was ill? Had you gone to see him, you would have found Me by his side!' Then God would again ask, 'O Son of Adam, I asked you to feed me, but you refused it to Me.' The man would submit, 'How could have I fed Thee, Thou art the Lord of the Worlds?' But the reply of God would be, 'Do you not remember that one of My slaves had asked you for food? Didn't you know that if you had given him food, you would have found it with Me!' God would again ask, 'O Son of Adam, I asked you water to drink but you refused it to Me!' The man would say in reply, 'O Lord, How could have I given water to Thee! Thou art the Lord of the worlds!' But the reply given by God would be, 'Do you not recollect that one of my slaves asked you for water, but you refused! Did you not know that if you had given him water, you would have found it with Me?'"⁷⁹

Islam preaches unalloyed and absolute concept of the oneness of God and rejects every form of anthropomorphism. Still, it employs this similitude to drive home the rank and dignity of man in the eyes of God. Has any other religion or philosophical thought accorded a nobler place to human beings than that assigned by Islam?

⁷⁹ Sahih Muslim.

The Prophet of Islam taught that the surest way to attract blessings of God was to be kind and considerate to others.

"The Most Compassionate (God) is kind on those who are kind to others. If you would show kindness to those who live on the earth, He who lives in the Heaven, shall shower His blessings on you."⁸⁰

You can very well imagine the pitiable condition of man in the days when this powerful voice of human dignity had not been raised in the world. A mere whim of a king or an emperor could then cost the lives of a thousand men. It was then not unusual for an ambitious adventurer to put to sword the entire population of a conquered land. Alexander converted all the countries from Greece to India into a vast battlefield. Caesars played with the lives of human beings as if they were wild beasts. The two World Wars fought only recently had cost the lives of millions merely for securing markets for the industrial produce of advanced nations or to establish national or political ascendancy of certain nations over all others. Iqbal has correctly assessed the political ambitions of man in this verse.

Man is still possessed by the imperialistic lust,
What a pity! Man prowling after man as yet.

At the time when Muhammad (peace be upon him) was invested with the mantle of prophethood, a general sense of pessimism springing from the then prevalent notions of worthlessness of human nature and

⁸⁰ Abu Dawud.

hopelessness of Divine succour filled the air. The ancient religions of the East and the mutilated Christianity, specially in the West, had an equal share in producing that mental climate. The philosophy of rebirth, preached by the religions of ancient India, which assigned no place to the will and decision of man, meant that the present life was but a form of retribution for one's actions during his previous life with which the Christian dogma of Original Sin and atonement had joined hands to shake the confidence of millions, all over the world, in the responsiveness and amenability of human actions. Mankind had lost faith in the mercy of God whose eternal and immutable decree seemed to have condemned man to a pre-determined destiny without reference to his evil or virtuous behaviour. But Muhammad (peace be upon him) affirmed that man was born with a clean slate and perfect freedom of action. Man was, declared the Prophet, the author of his actions, both good and evil, and deserved reward or punishment in accordance with his own decision to shape the course of his actions. Discarding the theory of vicarious atonement, the Qur'an established once for all that every man was his own redeemer.

"And that for man shall be naught,
Save that wherefor he maketh effort,
And that his endeavour shall be presently
observed."⁸¹

This was a message of salvation to man which gave him a new confidence in himself and in his ability to chart out his destiny. He applied himself with a renewed vigour,

⁸¹ Q.53:39-40.

confidence and determination to shape up his own life and brighten the future of humanity.

The Prophet of Islam also declared that sins were but temporary deviations from the right path inherent in the nature of man, and were brought about by ignorance, mistake and the promptings of the devil or man's own sensual desires. But the innate urge of man was to regret his mistakes and seek pardon of God with a contrite heart. To be broken in spirit by a sense of the guilt and to seek the forgiveness of God showed the goodness of human nature and attracted mercy of the Lord. This gospel of hope and good tidings was a revolutionary message to the despondent humanity condemned for ever by the guilt of Original Sin and one's past misdoings. What a great change it meant in the prevailing atmosphere of gloom and depression of spirits is illustrated by the fact that the Prophet came to be known as 'Apostle of Repentance'. Repentance, he said, did not involve faint-heartedness, nor did it arise from fear of disapprobation, but was a bold and daring step of the first man, Adam, who had thus shown the nobility of his innate nature. The Prophet of Islam endued repentance with the sacredness attached to the acts of devotion to God. He preached the virtues of seeking pardon so forcefully that even the irredeemable sinners, who had lost all hope of forgiveness, resolved to turn away from the sinful ways and to begin a new life of virtue and uprightness and many of them attained a sublimity of spirit that was envied by others.

Describing the clemency of God Who is ever willing to forgive the sinners, the Qur'an employs a diction so alluringly charming that one wonders whether

God loves them more who seeks His forgiveness after deviating from the path of virtue. The Qur'anic verse quoted here shows how forbearing, how long-suffering and how magnanimous God is to the man who cares to turn towards Him for exoneration of his sins. Says the Qur'an.

"Say thou : O my bondmen who have committed extravagance against themselves, despair not of the mercy of Allah; verily Allah will forgive their sins altogether. Verily He! He is the forgiving, the Merciful."⁸²

Some other verses of the Qur'an exhorting the believers to acquire positive merits and to win their way to the everlasting bliss, address them in these words:

"And vie one with another for forgiveness from your Lord, and toward the Garden as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who ward off (evil):

"And those who spend (of that which Allah hath given them) in ease and in adversity, those who control their wrath and are forgiving toward mankind; Allah loveth the good;

"And those who, when they do an evil thing or wrong themselves, remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins - Who forgiveth sins save Allah only? - and will not knowingly repeat (the wrong) they did.

⁸² Q.39:53.

"The reward of such will be forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide for ever - a bountiful reward for workers!"⁸³

Among the characteristics of the true believers, enumerated in another verse, repentance takes precedence of all others.

"They are those who repent, who worship, who praise, who fast constantly, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who command the reputable and restrain from the disreputable and who keep the ordinances of Allah : and bear thou glad tidings to the believers."⁸⁴

The place of honour accorded to those who repent of their sins is illustrated by the verses of the Qur'an revealed on the occasion of the forgiveness of three companions⁸⁵ of the holy Prophet, who had been excluded from other followers for their failure to accompany the Prophet in the expedition of Tabuk. Before the verse alludes to the mistake of these companions being condoned by God, it mentions the Prophet and the Ansar and the Muhajirin in order that no stigma was attached to them after their mistakes had been pardoned. The Qur'an, in this way, teaches all believers, who take the companions of the Prophet as models of virtue, that no ignominy

⁸³ Q. 3: 133-36.

⁸⁴ Q. 9 : 112.

⁸⁵ The companions were K'ab b. Malik, Hilal b. Umayya and Murara b. Rabi'l. See the Chap. 'The Expedition of Tabuk.'

attaches to a man after a genuine change of heart. The way these verses explain the consequences of the blotting out of the sins and elation of the repentant sinners can hardly be found in the scriptures of other religions or treatises on ethics. These verses read :

"Allah hath turned in mercy to the Prophet, and to the Muhajirin and the Ansar who followed him in the hour of hardship after the hearts of a party of them had almost swerved aside, then turned He unto them in mercy. Lo! He is Full of Pity, Merciful for them.

"And to the three also (did He turn in mercy) who were left behind, when the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for them, and their own souls were straitened for them till they bethought them that there is no refuge from Allah save toward Him. Then turned He unto them in mercy that they (too) might turn (repentant unto Him). Lo! Allah! He is the Relenting, the Merciful."⁸⁶

Remission of sin leads us to one of the chief attributes of the Divine Being, that is, His mercy and compassion. The bounty of God's mercy is the constant theme of the Qur'an. Says God : "My mercy embraceth all things;"⁸⁷ while a celestial Tradition of the Prophet tells us : Verily, My mercy overcomes My anger." To be despaired

⁸⁶ Q. 9: 117-18.

⁸⁷ Q. 7: 156.

of God's mercy was made a cardinal sin. Quoting Yaqub⁸⁸ and Ibrahim, the two great Prophets of God, the Qur'an announces : "Verily, none despaireth of the comfort of Allah except a people disbelieving"⁸⁹ and "who despaireth of the mercy of his Lord save those who are astray?"⁹⁰

The misery and suffering the human race endured in the world was, according to the Jewish and Christian doctrines, but a feeble image of the never-ending agony which awaited man in the future world. The monastic orders of the Medieval Ages had taken up this doctrine, which, in itself, was sufficiently revolting , but they had developed it with an appalling vividness and minuteness. The humanity scared by these ghastly visions and glimpses of eternal suffering, was relieved by the Prophet's emphasis on God's all-embracing mercy and the efficacy of repentance which could wipe the slate clean of even the most vicious among the castaways of society.

Concept of the Unity of Spirit and matter

And now we come to yet another gift of the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) which is still more far-reaching, more beneficial to the humanity at large. This was the concept of the unity of spirit and matter, the harmony of the sacred and the mundane. He taught that the distinction made between the two was superficial and formal, for every action of man, whether secular or religious, was guided by his motive or mental attitude, which, in the terminology of religion, was known

⁸⁸ Jacob.

⁸⁹ Q. 12: 87.

⁹⁰ Q. 15: 56.

as *niya* or intention. For no religious belief is entirely divorced from the realities of human experience in its manifold practical aspects, the intention or purpose with which any act is done sets the test of its being good or bad. He did not recognise the division between the temporal and the ecclesiastical since man's desire to propitiate God and to follow His commands permeates into every fibre of human activity, no matter whether it is the art of government or war, availing oneself of one's earthly possessions, or satisfaction of one's natural desires, or earning one's living, or leading a married life. With a noble intention every mundane act is turned into a virtuous deed and a means to attaining propinquity to God. On the contrary, no merit whatsoever attaches to acts like devotion to God or fighting in the path of God if the sincere desire to attain the will and pleasure of God were absent.

The ancient world had divided life into two compartments: religious and the secular; and the result was that a wedge had been driven between those who selected one of these as the pursuit of their lives. Often, the two groups were at logger-heads with one another, for, the 'world' and 'religion' were to them incompatible spheres of human life. Every man had to choose either one of the two since nobody could be expected to travel in two boats simultaneously. The prevalent view was that the path of salvation lay not through the rough and tumble of life, but away from the social, economic and political problems of worldly pursuits. No concept of religion which bars the gates to material progress and acquisition of power, riches and fame, could be of interest to intelligent, capable and

ambitious persons : the result being that a great segment of humanity had delivered itself from the religious discipline of ascetism which had come to be associated with religion. By withdrawing themselves from the virtuous pursuits, these men had prevented the great importance of morals from appearing perceptibly in public affairs. The State had revolted against the Church and made itself free from all moral obligations. This hideous schizophrenia not only divested what was called worldly from the gifts of spiritual beatitude, but also gave birth to the modern faithlessness and agnosticism of Europe which is now threatening to inundate the entire world, if only, because of its political and cultural supremacy. The present wave of crass materialism, loss of faith and moral debasement is but a direct consequence of the division between the spirit and matter invented by the old pagan civilizations.

The Prophet of Mercy, who was sent to the humanity as a warner as well as a messenger of glad tidings, converted the entire life of man into devotion to God by denying the existence of any cleavage between the spiritual and temporal spheres of human affairs. He demolished the wedge between the men of religion and those of the world and commanded all of them to unite their efforts for attaining the pleasure of God and service of humanity. It was because of him that the world could see the ascetics who wore crowns on their heads and the warriors who spent their nights in devotions and prayers.

It would be difficult to conceive a more complete transformation of life than the one brought about by the fusion of the secular and the sacred, which would require several volumes to be explained in detail. Iqbal has very

succinctly versified the significance of this concept in one of his immortal poems.

On monastic order was laid the foundation of Church,

How could mend a city contain the royalty in its confines?

The conflict was deep, between hermitry and kingship,

One was triumphant, the other subdued,

Politics got rid of religion,

Helpless was the high priest.

When the world and religion parted ways,

Avarice was the Ruler, King and Vizier

Dualism was the doom of mind and matter,

Dualism made the civilization blind.

This is the miracle of a dweller of the desert,

Whose warnings reflected the tidings-glad;

That the humanity's only refuge was this,

That (the mystic) Junayd unites with Ardsheer (the king)!

Islam made the man conscious of the Ultimate end of his life

Yet another radical change brought about by the Prophet of Islam in the life of man was to make him conscious of the ultimate end of his life. Unaware of his goal and objective, man had his eyes fixed on profane and paltry objects. He directed his whole intelligence and labour to the acquisition of wealth or land or fame or power. Goodness having been associated with the pleasurable things, the main object of the vast majority of

people was to sublimate their conceptions of happiness and interest with the satisfaction of carnal desires, songs and colour, merrymaking, fun and amusements. Revelry of the rich and the powerful soon brought up a class of parasites whose whole business was to tickle the fancy of their patrons. But Muhammad (peace be upon him) told man that the great business of man was to exert himself and to strive to attain the perfect knowledge of God; to contemplate on His nature and attributes and to lead his wandering soul to divine propinquity through realisation of the Unlimited; to search out the Unity of the Cause of all Causes in the amazing diverse phenomena of Nature; and to seek His pleasure through being kind and just and virtuous. He told man that these were the objectives whose achievement conferred a rank on him envied by the angels of God.

Thus, the prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) made a clean sweep of the existing order of things in the world. The longings and desires of man were now centered on a new objective; the love of God took possession of his being; the pleasure of God became the immortal thirst of human heart; mercy and kindness to God's creatures was recognised as the greatest virtue which became the sole object of man's endeavour.

It was then, after the advent of Islam, that the leading feature of all the countries, Arabia and Iran, Syria and Egypt, Turkistan and Iraq, North Africa and Spain became the search for higher and tender virtues, in the pursuit of which we find thousands of love lorn souls. During this period we see innumerable men of God preaching love of God, kindness and compassion to every

sentient being, merits of virtuous living, acquisition of knowledge for attaining the pleasure of God, revulsion to cruelty and indecency and the grace of humility and modesty. They taught the lesson of human dignity and brotherhood of man and made this earth a kingdom of God.

If you peep into the souls of these elevated souls, you would witness unbelievable flight of their imagination, purity of their innermost feelings and nimbleness of their perceptions. You would see how they were ever willing to put their own life at stake for others, how they made their own children and family suffer for the good of all and sundry, the way they compelled the autocratic kings and potentates to do justice to the weak and the poor and how rightfully just they were even to their enemies. Of a fact, it would have been difficult for us to believe today what a fine specimen of humanity, what a sublime soul were these men of God if the historians and biographers had not preserved a truthful record of their lives and doings.

This striking change in the manners and morals of the people was, indeed, the greatest miracle worked by the holy Prophet of Islam.

Verily, God says in truth : *"We have sent thee not save as a mercy for the worlds."*

GLIMPSES OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S SUBLIME MORALS AND HIS SIMPLE AND NOBLE TEACHINGS

The facts stated above give briefly an idea of the difficulties and hardships the Prophet (PBUH) had to face in the proclamation of his prophethood, propagation of his teachings and protection of all those taking to his teachings, In a country where there was no government and law and order. Where murder and blood shed was, whose citizens might be resembling ravenous beasts and worse than cattle in ignorance and total absence of discernment and rationality. Putting up a claim, queer to the entire country, and fomenting trouble and opposition among all the tribes, was not so easy. Again, this claim gaining favour under conditions of unlimited opposition of millions of people, bent on wiping it out with all their might, hearts and minds, and means at their disposal, persistently for years together, is certainly a conspicuous proof of the Divine Aid.

In connection with the events related earlier, the moral excellence, attributes and laudable deeds outshine like pure gold in sand and dirt. And it is these events that brings to light the fact that in the totally opposite conditions of oppression and helplessness and power and majesty, doing existence with the same simplicity can be the accomplishment of one whose heart has been totally possessed by the Divine Law, purged of all the worldly involvements.

The blessed events of the Prophet's (PBUH) life are a model and an example for every person, every class, both for individuals and groups and parties.

Instead of the perfections of the prophethood and his characteristics as the Prophet, only those simple natural good habits, good disposition, amiability and highly good manners shall be taken up here which a born fortunate person of a docile nature can take as a model of moral perfection:

Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example. Al Qur'an XXXIII : 21

Our leader, Muhammad (PBUH) was unlettered and upto the time of his being raised as Prophet, had not had the company of any learned person.

Archery, horsemanship, use of lance in fighting, poetry, panegyric or laudative poetry, geneology were those arts and skills of that period which every young man of a noble family did pick up for the sake of fame and prestige, and without which no one had any chance of coming to a position of honour or distinction in his community. The Prophet had not learnt or picked up any of these from any body as a student. Nor did he ever shown any interest in learning them.

Administration of Professor Cideo, a well known French Scholar

French Professor Cideo writes about the Prophet (PBUH):

"He had a smiling countenance, sociable, mostly quiet (a man of few words), remembering God most of the time, far away from absurdity, abhorring frivolity and had

the most appropriate opinion and wisest (among those around him).

In the matter of doing justice he never made any distinction between the far and near (close to him or present before him and a stranger or one absent). He loved the indigent and was happy to be among the poverty stricken. He never meted out a degrading treatment to a poor person because of his lack of means. He captivated the hearts of his associates and patiently put up with the uncouthness or objectionable conduct of the ignorant. He never parted with any one talking to him until he himself left him. He loved his companions most. He had no hesitation in sitting on the ground if nothing to cover it was available. He himself repaired his own shoes and put patches on his clothes. Met even his enemies and unbelievers with a cheerful countenance.

Hujjah-al-Islam Ghazali writes:

The Prophet offered green fodder to the cattle himself, tied the camels, cleaned the house, milked the goat, took his food with his servant or slave, gave a helping hand to the servant in his work, went to the market for purchase of the necessities of life and himself brought these things home. He was always the first to greet (say salam) to every one, young or old, high or low (never allowing them precedence over himself). Whoever accompanied him, he walked hand in hand with him.

He never made distinction between master and man, Abyssinian and a Turk. He had the same attire for the day and night wear. However lowly a person invited him to dine with him, he took it cheerfully. He was not given to saving for the morning from the night's viruals, nor from

the day's food for the night contentment and real trust in Allah. He was very soft natured, of a generous disposition and cheerful countenance (smiling face) but never laughed (loudly) He was mostly full of anxiety for one reason or another but not ill-tempered. He was meek but without meanness. He was awe-inspiring but not a harsh countenance. He was generous but not prodigal. He was merciful to one and all but expected nothing from anyone. He mostly kept him head-bent.

Shah Wali-al-Allah writes:

Whoever happened to confront him suddenly became awe-inspired and whoever sat with him for a while became a devoted follower and admirer of him.

He was particularly kind to his kinsmen and those serving him. Anas (R) served him for ten years but never foul word or abuse befouled his pure, clean tounge, nor he ever cursed any one. He showed remarkable patience in face of distress from others. He showed profound mercy to the people in general. None ever suffered at his hand or by his tongue. Reform of his family and the community received his first attention. He was aware of every body and everything. His attention was focussed on the Kingdom of Heaven.

In Sahih Bukhari it has been said:

The Prophet (PBUH) gave glad tidings to the obedient and warned the disobedient and transgressor. Allah's servant and His Messenger offered asylum to the uninformed. Leaving everything to Allah (after doing what was his own due). Neither harsh in behavior nor in speech.

Never raised his voice in speaking, nor tit for tat in dealings. Those seeking forgiveness, he readily forgave (if it was not transgression against God. The sinner also he forgave. His mission was to correct the crookedness in religion. His teachings gave eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf and lifted the curtains from the hearts of the negligent. The Prophet's (PBUH) character was decorated with every excellence and qualified with all the finest attributes. Peace and tranquility was his attire and doing good his distinctive sign, *taqwa*, (piety), his conscience, wisdom his speech, justice his conduct. His Shari'ah wholly uprightness and his millat (Belief and Faith). Guidance is his guide. He removes misguidance, elevating the position of the lowly and making the little-known outstanding, changing minority into majority and the want or destitution into richness.

His silence and speech

The Prophet, as a matter of habit, remained silent, never speaking needlessly. The Prophet (PBUH) was extremely sweet-spoken and eloquent. His speech was not at all affected. His words were so captivating as they went to the listener's heart and soul. This quality of his speech was so compelling as even the adversaries had to admit it. And again it was this marvel of his speech which the ignorant attributed to sorcery.

The continuity of his speech was such that, in word or purport, there was no fault. He used words with such precision and order that if the listener liked, he could count them.

His smiling and weeping

The Prophet never laughed loudly, nor did he burst into laughter on his own. His laughter was limited to a serene smile. However in the pre-dawn prayer (Tahajjud) he burst into tears at times.

At other times the death of a sincere associate (companion) or kinsman his eyes welled up with tears.

His infant son, Ibrahim, had died while yet a suckling. When he was put into the grave, it was too much for a loving father and mercy for mankind and brought tears to his eyes. He said:

"The eyes manifest grief, the heart is grieved too, but we say only what our Lord and Sustainer loves to hear from us: O Ibrahim thou in thy parting caused us grief."

On another occasion he happened to lift on to his lap his grand daughter, Zainab's (R) dying daughter. His love for the child and in death pangs, proved too much for him and it brought tears to his eyes. Sa'd (R) asked him about this phenomenon and was told that it was due to those tender chords in the human heart that are touched. It is God-given mercy. And Allah too will be merciful only to those of His servant that are kindhearted and show mercy to fellow-beings.

Once Abdullah Ibn Mas'ood (R) was reciting Quran before the Prophet (at his bidding). When he came to the verse:

How then if we brought from each people a witness and we brought thee as a witness against these people.

(Q.IV : 41)

He said to him: "That's enough, Ibn Masood (R), lifting his eyes saw tears running down the Prophet's (PBUH) eyes.

Instructions about diet

The Phophet (PBUH) advised people not to go to sleep on a hungry stomach (missing the night meal) and pointed to it as a sign of senility. He also advised them against going to sleep immediately after supper.

He used to persuade people to be sparing or at least moderate in eating. He used to say to them that they should keep one-third of the stomach for food, another one-third for water and the last one-third for the stomach itself (meaning that the stomach should not be fully stuffed to cause it pain or at least inconvenience and hardship).

He used to take fruits and vegetable with their correctives.

To be cautious against certain diseases and the healthy to be careful were his orders.

Sick persons were advised by him to get treated by a physician clever at his job and also stressed abstention. He forbade a novice and a quack to practice medicine and held him responsible for damage to people's health.

He also forbade use of prohibited things as medicines and said: "Allah has not kept healing properties in the prohibited things for you."

Visiting the Sick

Whoever among the companions fell ill, he used to visit him. He used to sit very close to the sick person and tried to console him. He used to encourage him saying:

"Allah willing, you shall be all right, there is no cause for worry." He also asked the patient if he desired anything, and if it was not harmful to him, he would arrange it for him. A Jewish boy, who often visited him, fell ill and the Prophet visited him in his sick-bed and it is reported also that he asked him to embrace Islam and after approval of his father, he did.

Treatment of diseases

When suffering from any ailment, he himself used medicines and advised others also to do the same, saying:

"O ye servants of Allah! Do take medicine, since Allah has created a cure for every melody, save one disease. People asked him which is that? He said : "It is extreme old age (decrepitude). (When the body reaction to natural deterioration and the weakening process of immunity.

Speeches

He used to address people standing on the floor or from a pulpit or on camel's back, beginning from bearing witness to the oneness of Allah and concluded with asking Allah for forgiveness. Something from the Quran was a must as part of it and the Islamic principles were taught (preached) in it.

"All those things were explained in the speeches (of the Prophet) which were the need of the hour for the Muslim community and according to the time and its demand everything was covered in them. (Zad-al-Ma'ad Vol. I, P. 49)

These harangues were not limited to Firday congregations, but whenever he felt there was need for it he would speak with the Word of God to support his own.

At the time of speaking he held in his hand a club, a bow on which, if need be, he would temporarily support himself. But there is no instance of his ever-holding a sword in his hand when speaking to an audience nor he ever used it as a body support.

Hafiz Ibn-al-Qayyim says: "The ignorant are often heard saying that the Prophet (PBUH) took the pulpit while sword in his hand, pointing to the (most erroneous) belief that Islam was propagated at the point of sword." The 'Hafiz goes on to say, (is of the opinion) that this common belief of the ignorant masses is totally unfounded.

1. Supporting himself on a sword has no proof.
2. Harangues started in Madinah which had been conquered with the force of the Quran and not the might of the sword. Again, the Hafiz goes on to add that the Islamic Faith was established with the Heavenly Revelation.

Sadaqah and Gifts

He never used anything coming as *Sadaqah* (charity). However, he had no objection to accept gifts.

The gifts from sincere Companions (R) as well as Christians and Jews he accepted and, in turn, sent them gifts. But those from the polytheists were rejected outright.

He rode the mule sent by Maquqas, the king of Egypt, and in the battle of Hunain that same mule was under him. But he rejected outright the horse sent by 'Amir

bin Malik and plainly stated, "We do not accept gifts from a polytheist.

The precious gifts coming to the Prophet (PBUH) were usually given to his Companions.

His own praise

Any such laudation of his praise that would bring other prophets lower, he disapproved in the extreme and used to say:

'Never resort to a mode in relation to the prophet's attributes which lowers one than any other.'

He attended a marriage ceremony where girls of very tender age were singing the songs of laudable deeds of their encounters. They also sang in praise of the Prophet (PBUH) that they had among them a Prophet who can tell you today of the happenings of tomorrow. The Prophet stopped them from saying those words and asked them to continue with their songs of ancestors.

Pointing out the reality or Correcting an erroneous belief

Death occurred to the Prophet's son Ibrahim. And that also happened to be the day of solar eclipse. People started talking. "The sun, too, is mourning the death of Ibrahim. It is eclipsed. The Prophet addressed those present there: Solar and Lunar eclipses are the signs of Allah, they do not eclipse due to anybody's death.

Regard for the general expediency

When the Quraysh renovated Ka'bah during the pre-Islamic period, it was not raised on the old

foundations. They left out some covered area outside, with a plinth so high that ladder was needed to enter the enclosure and with only one door. The Prophet one day commented on it addressing 'Ayesah (R).

"Your community (Quraysh) have embraced Islam only lately, otherwise I would have demolished their structure and made certain necessary alterations. Ka'bah needs two doors, one for entry and another for departure.

When the mischievous activities of the hypocrites crossed all limits of decency and humanity, 'Umar Faruq (R) suggested that they should be put to the sword. The Prophet said to him: "No. People will adversely comment: "Mohammad has started killing his own companions and friends."

Humanness and apostleship

The Prophet always tried to show his commands emanating from him as an Apostle separate from those he issued as a human being:

1. Once he said: "I am after all a human and conflicts and quarrels are put up before me. Someone of you can express himself and put up his case better than the other which gives a notion of his truth, and I decide the case in his favour. So, if a Muslim gets anything from his Muslim brother's share, he should clearly understand that it is a part of fire, it is up to him now to take it or leave it."
2. He pleaded the case of Mughith and interceded with Baridah a slave girl and his (Mughith's) wife. She secured separation from him after

freedom. Baridah asked the Prophet (PBUH): Is that your command to me?" The Prophet replied: ? No. It is my intercession on his behalf. "To this she said: "I have no need of Mughith."

The Madinites, on the basis of experience, used to sprinkle the pollen dust of male date palm trees on the female tree's flowers. The Prophet once casually remarked: "Why is the need of this operation?" The owners of date palm groves gave up the practice, with the result that due to scanty pollination by natural agencies like wind alone, fruit that year was scanty too. The date palm growers brought this phenomenon to the Prophet's (PBUH) notice. He owned it without reserve that they knew their worldly affairs better than he did. "Follow me unstintedly with certainty only in those things I order you relating to your Faith," he concluded.

Affection shown to children

Passing by the children on his way, he greeted them initially with the Islamic salutation (As-Salam-u-Alaikum, peace be on you). He placed his hand on their heads and at times lifted one on to his lap.

Kindness to the Aged

After the conquest of Makkah Abu Bakr Siddiq(R) brought his old, decrepit, blind father to the Prophet (PBUH) for taking baiat of Faith and Loyalty from him. The Prophet (PBUH) said to Abu Bakr, "Why did you give all this trouble to an old man (in this state of disabilities)? I would have myself visited him.

Honour and prestige to the respectable

Sa'd bin Mu'az (R) who (came by a severed artery of the arm at the expedition of Khandaq which could not be sealed and ultimately caused his death), had been named by the Banu Quraiza to pronounce his decision in their case (of high treason) and called to the scene of action. When he came to the mosque, the Prophet (PBUH) asked his companions of Aus tribe to pay their respects to him by advancing to receive him, saying "Greet and receive your leader." And his tribesmen (Aus) followed the Prophet's bidding.

Hassan bin Thabit composed couplets lauding Islam and most effective resorts to the adversaries. As the mark of recognition of this services to Islam, a pulpit was laid in the mosque for his recital.

Prayer for the person engaged in service to Allah

Anas bin Malik served the Prophet for ten years in Madinah. During this long period he never took him to task. One day he prayed for him: "O Allah! Confer on him plentiful wealth and progeny and also bless them for him."

Respect and regard for others and hospitality

- The Prophet never sat with extended feet (legs) in company.
- Whoever met him on the way, he had precedence in greeting him.
- He also had precedence in shake hand.

- He called his companions by their patronymic appellations. (This was the mode of calling people honourably in Arabia)
- He never interrupted anybody while talking.
- If he was offering supererogatory prayer and somebody happened to come to see him, he would shorten it and after meeting his need continued the prayer.
- He was smiling most of the time.
- One of the camels (dromedaries) of the Prophet (PBUH) was called 'Asba. It was swift-footed and never allowed any camel to get and advance over her. A Bedouin Arab coming along on his mount surpassed 'Asba and the Muslims, so to say, took it ill, but the Prophet said:
- The sunnah of Allah in this world is that if He exalts any, He also brings him low.
- There came a person who called the Prophet (PBUH) the best (superior most) of the created beings. The Prophet (PBUH), however, said to him: that title befits only the Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH)
- Somebody came to see the Prophet (PBUH) and awe-inspired. He, however, reassured him saying: "Be at ease. I am not a king. I am the son of a poor woman of Quraysh who used to take dried meat."

Affection and Clemency

'Ayesha Siddiqah (R) says:

- Nobody in sweet nature and politeness came close to the Prophet (PBUH), whether a companion called him or a member of his own house his usual answer was, "I am here."
- Supererogatory devotional acts he would always perform in seclusion so that the Ummah may not be overburdened in his pursuit.
- When there appeared two alternatives before him, he always opted for the simpler and easier one.
- He entered a contract with his Lord that whomsoever he called a bad name or cursed, Allah should make it an atonement for his sins and a means of His Mercy, forgiveness and closeness.
- He had instructed that they should not talk ill about one another in my presence. I want to leave this world without any ill opinion about any one.
- Once on the occasion of solar scclipse, in the special congregation, he wept and prayed like this:
O my Lord and Cherisher! Thou hast promised me that my ummah shall not be recipient of any visitation from Thee,

So long I am Here with them, and
As long as they are beseeching Thee for their forgiveness.

And at present My Lord, I am among them and they are all seeking Thy forgiveness.

For every prophet there was a specific prayer and they invoked that and it was blessed with response. As for the specific one for me, I have kept it for the Last Day.

Justice and compassion

If two person fell foul of each other he meted out justice to them. If, however, he had a personal complaint against anybody, he would always forgive.

1. A respectable lady of Quraysh, Fatimah bint-Mazan, was found guilty of theft. The tribe wanted to save her from the prescribed punishment of this crime, chopping of the hand. So, as an "effective" measure, they made Osamah bin Zaid, a favourite of the Prophet (PBUH), her intercessor at the court of the Shari'ah. The Prophet (PBUH), in spite of his love and affection to him, disapproved Osamah's involving himself in the case, saying: "Dare you intercess in a limit set by Allah? Listen to me, if Fatimah bint Muhammad committed theft, I would have her hand chopped off."
2. Sawad bin 'Umar relates that one day he went to the Prophet gaudily dressed. The Prophet disapproved of it and patted my abdomen with the stick he had in his hand. I said to the Prophet (PBUH). "I shall avenge my self." The Prophet bared his abdomen and said to him: "You are welcome to it." (But all that he did was for kissing the seal of prophethood).

Clemency to the enemies

3. A severe famine struck Makkah, until the starving lot was compelled to subsist on carrion and bones. Abu Sufyan (one of the arch enemies of Islam and Muslims) came to the Prophet (P.B.U.M.) and addressed him as: "Muhammad! You preach kind treatment of kinsmen. Your community is at the doorstep of total annihilation. Kindly pray to God, which the Prophet most graciously did and in response brought heavy rains.
4. Thamamah bin Athal stopped supply of food grains to Makkans (after his embracing Islam) as a sign of goodwill to the Muslim community against their deadly enemies. However, the Prophet (PBUH) prevented him from persisting with it.
5. In Hudaibiah the Prophet was offering prayer with the Muslims when seventy or eighty persons quietly came down the Tan'im mount with evil intent of taking a heavy toll of Muslim lives while they were engaged in prayers. But they could not succeed in their satanic design and were taken prisoners. But the Prophet granted them their freedom without any ransom or punishment.

Generosity and magnanimity

6. He never turned away a beggar (anyone asking for help). Flat refusal was almost a taboo with him. If he was unable to do anything for him, he would

put up an excuse as if he were requesting to be forgiven for a shortcoming.

7. Somebody came to him asking for alms. The Prophet (PBUH) said to him that he had nothing to give him just then. He could however borrow in his name and he would pay it later. 'Umar Faruq said to him (the Prophet (PBUH)) that Allah had not compelled him to go beyond his means to help people. The Prophet kept quiet, evading his objection. An Ansari, sitting close by him, spoke out: "O Apostle of Allah, why not respond to him saying, 'Allah, the Master and Lord of the Throne is our Sustainer and as such there is no fear for poverty and destitution.'" The Prophet smiled and his face was a glow with delight and he said : "You are right. I have these commandments from Him (My Master, Lord and Sustainer).
8. Once he gave an indigent person half a '*wasaq*' of grain borrowed from some one. The creditor turned up later for recovery of his loan. The Prophet ordered payment of full one *wasaq* of grains to this creditor, half that he had loaned and an additional half from us as a gesture of generosity and reward for a good deed (helping a destitute).
9. He used to say and had almost declared it as a matter of policy that the assets of the dead is the

share of the inheritors and the debts are the liability of the Islamic state, if he died a destitute.

Modesty and Bashfulness

10. Abu Sa'eed Khudri (R) says that the Prophet (PBUH) was more modest than a veil-observing bashful girl. Whenever something disgusting came before him in people's mutual talk, his face showed that disgust from his facial expression.
11. 'Ayesah Tayyibah has stated that if the Prophet did not like any deed or word of any person, he did not object to and forbid it pointedly, but in a general way showed his disapproval of that word or deed (to avoid embarrassment of the guilty).
12. In day-to-day affairs and dealings, he would take upon himself the greatest burden but would not order anyone else to undertake it or offer a helping hand out of modesty.
13. Whenever some repentant person begged to be excused, the Prophet (instead of scolding or lecturing him from a superior stand according to the way of people) modestly hung his head and accepted his excuse.
14. 'Ayesah Tayyibah reports that she never saw him naked.

Patience and Meekness

15. Zaid bin Sa'anh was a Jew. The Prophet (PBUH) had to pay back his loan. He came to him and

snatched his sheet wrapped around him, caught hold of him by his clothes and blurted out saying : "The offspring of Abd-al-Muttalib are very stingy in matter of payments." Umar Faruq (R) rebuked him sternly. The Prophet smiled and said to 'Umar (R) that he ought to be a good pay-master and taught him good manners in his demands. Then he turned to Zaid and said : "There are still three days in the expiry of time appointed for repayment." Then he ordered 'Umar to pay his dues and pay him twenty more, for he had scolded and threatened him."

16. A bedouin Arab came to the Prophet and jerked the free end of his sheet so violently that its thick border injured his neck, leaving a red mark. And then the beduin opened his foul mouth and blurted out: "Mohammad! This bounty of Allah that is with thee is neighter thine nor thy father's. So, give me also a camel load of it."

The Prophet after a brief pause said to him: "This goods certainly belongs to Allah and I am His slave." Then he ordered that he should be given a camel load of barley and another of dates be given to him.

Prophet's Sufferings at Taif

The Prophet went to Ta'if to convey the message of Islam to the tribes of that (fertile, green and

prosperous) region of Arabia. The residents of that locality threw mud on him and also taunting remarks on his return journey and flung stons and brickbats on him to make him bleed all over and causing unconsciousness. He did not, however, curse them, saying to his companion: "If these people do not embrace Islam, it is expected, their progeny will do."

FORGIVENESS AND MERCY

Ayeshah Tayyibah states that the Prophet (SAWS) never avenged himself on anybody.

His sufferings during the Battle of Uhud

In the battle of Uhud the Unbelievers hit him with stones, causing loss of several teeth, a broken forehead, and he also fell into a (cleverly covered) pit causing hurt. The companions asked him to curse the infidels for their foul deeds. The Prophet (SAWS), however, said to them: "I have not been raised to curse people. Allah has sent me to make people worthy of meeting their Lord worthily." And then he prayed like this : "O Allah! Guide my people to the Right Path, for they know me not."

The Prophet (PBUH) (on some expedition) slept under a tree, hanging his sword from a branch of that tree. Ghauras bin-al-Harith happened to come there and, sword in hand, he awakened the Prophet in an insulting, brutish manner. He addressed to him : "Who is going to save you from me?" The Prophet (PBUH) said : "Allah." The infidel fell unconscious. The Prophet (PBUH) lifted the sword and asked him in return : "Who is going to save you from me." He was dumb-founded. The Prophet allowed him to go scot free, saying : "I do not take revenge on my own behalf."

Hibar bin Aswad struck the Prophet's daughter, Zainab (R) with a spear. She fell down from the litter causing miscarriage and that shock ultimately became the cause of her death. Hibar begged for mercy and forgiveness and was forgiven.

In his harangue after the last pilgrimage he had declared to the largest ever gathering: "I declare all those issues causing bloodshed among tribes as null and void, and as the starting point I take back the claim to avenge a murder in my own family and, likewise, the claims of the interest due on the loans of my uncle 'Abbas (R).

Truth and Trusts

Even the most ardent enemies of the Prophet conceded to him these attributes. From his very early age he had come to be known as the "Truthful" and the "Trustworthy." It was for this reason that the unbelievers brought their quarrels before him for decision before prophethood. (And the trusts with him at the time of his migration were returned to their owners by his cousin and companion 'Ali, left behind in Makkah with this end in view).

Once Abu Jahal said to him : "I do not mistrust you and call you a liar. But somehow I cannot bring myself to agree and give credit to your teachings.

As already referred to in brief above, the infidels who had hatched up the ghastliest

conspiracies to kill him (the Prophet (PBUH)) before his migration, he left his cousin 'Ali (R) behind (surrounded on all sides of the house by murderous wretches, only to deliver safely the trusts lying with him, (the Prophet (PBUH)) all this while.

Modesty and Chastity

The Prophet says : "I never participated in any rituals of the Jahiliyah. Only on two occasions I just intended to attend and take part in them but was saved by Allah from those evils. Once I said to my associate herdsman that if he agreed to mind my herd, I also would like to go to the town like other young men telling tales and hearing them from others. I came to the town with this intention, but at the first house of jubilation of a marriage there was loud instrumental music. I started looking at the scene when I dozed off into sound slumber. I woke up at sunrise. Once again I came with the same intention but sleep overtook me as before and the time passed. Barring these two occasions I never even intended to indulge in abominable things of the culture of Jahiliyah.

Before ascension to the Prophethood Zaid bin 'Amr bin Nufail invited the Prophet (PBUH) to a feast. Meat was also served on the table. The Prophet, however, remarked: I abstain strictly from meat from the altars of the seats of idols or other dedicated places of your worship. I can take only that meat over which Allah's name has been invoked at the time of slaughter.

Abstinence

The Prophet used to pray like this :

"O Allah! I may starve one day and be fed another day. With pangs of hunger I may beseech You humbly, imploring You for food and after satisfaction may be engaged in You Praises.

Siddiqah (R) says that often for a whole month over hearth remained cold without fire (nothing to cook food to eat), subsisting on water and dates.

'Ayesah (R) says that the Prophet after coming to Madinah never had had wheaten bread to eat for one whole month.

At the time of his (sad) demise, his armour was lying mortgaged for barley grains with a Jew.

During the last night of the Prophet on the earth 'Ayesah (R) had to borrow oil for lamp from a neighbour to dispel darkness.

He often prayed; "O Allah! Confer on the progeny of Muahmmad (PBUH) just enough to satisfy their hunger."

It should be carefully kept in mind that all this cautiousness and abstention was voluntary. He was under no compulsion to take to this mode of life, nor had he any idea to regard or make any permitted thing prohibited to himself. Only once in his life time he had stopped taking a particular variety of honey and had for apparently good reasons sworn against its use. One of his consorts did not like the smell of

that honey which he took at Zainab's place, visiting her often for taking it. That particular sensitive consort with others brought it to his knowledge, and hence abstention. But Allah pointed it out to him that making prohibited what Allah had permitted did not become a believer, not to say a Prophet (PBUH).

O Prophet! Why holdest thou to be forbidden that which Allah has made lawful to thee. Thou sleekest to please thy consorts? But Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

-Al Qur'an LXVI:1

CONSIDERATION FOR THE NICE GENDER AND AIDING THEM

1. The mother of the believers, Safiyah (R) was once with the Prophet (PBUH) in a journey. He would take them all by turns decided by casting lots, to which they all agreed). Safiyah, covering her entire body with a sheet, sat on the back seat of the camel with the Prophet. When she wanted to take her seat, the Prophet extended his knee and keeping her foot on his (bent) knee she could go up to her seat safely. (She was short-statured and this was the reason to do so). Ayeshah (R) had once in a lighter vein hinted at it in the presence of the Prophet and had faced his disapproval in a rather harsh tone.
2. Once, as an accident, the she-camel's foot slipped and the Prophet and Safiyah both fell down from camel's back. Abu Talhah rushed to the aid of the Prophet, but he pointed out to him the principle of 'Ladies first'.

3. On a particular journey women were riding camels in litters (their usual seats). The camel driver who was on foot holding the nose strings of their camels, started singing songs that prompt the camels to be more swift. The Prophet noticing this change in camel's speed warned him (the singer) to be careful lest injures (damages) the 'glassware' (through negligence). In these words of his women have been likened to delicate (easily breakable) glass apparatus. Apart from their exquisiteness and elegance, comparing them with glass is due to their natural weakness which makes them deserving of comfort.

TAKING CARE OF THE PRISONERS OF WAR

The Prisoners of war were treated as guest. One of these prisoners captured in the battle of Badr who lived in Madinah with the Muslims for a few days, has said:

"Allah be Merciful to the Muslims, they fed us better and looked to our comforts before their own families." When the prisoner of war came to him the Prophet first of all arranged for their proper dress.

Mainly Physical exercises

The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged and induced people mainly to do physical exercises. Rukanah was the mightiest wrestler of Arabia and conditioned his Islam with defeat in bout. The Prophet had subdued him thrice.

Archery

The Prophet (PBUH) induced young men to marksmanship. For this competition he divided them into two groups. Once he asked one party to start competition declaring himself with one party. On hearing it, the other party restrained themselves from shooting arrows. When asked the reason of their withdrawal, they explained that since the Prophet was with the other party, how dare we shoot against his party. The Prophet said to them: "Do continue your shooting, I am with both of you."

Horse racing

Horse races were conducted under orders of the Prophet. A long race used to be a distance of 6 miles while a short race was only a matter of one mile.

Census

The Prophet ordered that the names of all the believers be written down for his inspection and it was complied with. The number of believers was found to be one thousand and five hundred. The Muslims rejoiced and thanked Allah for that increase in their numbers. They started saying: "We are now a thousand and a half in strength, what is there to be afraid of? We have passed through a stage when any one of us had to offer his prayers alone, and was in mortal fear of enemies attack."

It is regrettable indeed that we do not know when was this census conducted. Other reports of Sahih Bukhari put it as the third census, of the then Muslim world (Madinah). In the first census the number of the Muslims was only 500, and between 700 and 1,000 in the second.

The teachings of the apostle of Allah

The teaching of the Prophet comprising beliefs, habits, affairs of life, devotional acts, mortal sins. Salvation and Beneficence and good deeds for the sake of Allah's pleasure over and above those actuated by '*taqwa*' (piety, or fear of Allah). It is a limitless ocean leaving nothing out which concerns man in any way. The Prophet's (PBUH) excellence and perfection and superiority of Islam rest on them alone. Here, it is being just touched upon, to be taken up in greater detail later.

Allah's rights to Man's Obedience and Man's rights to Allah's bounty

Man's obligation to Allah lies in His worship and taking no partners with Him. And man can expect to receive Allah's bounty.

Allah's Mercy

The Prophet is reported to have said that Allah, in His Book that is with Him on the Throne, has written:

My Mercy surmounts My Wrath. (Sahih Bukhari)

Serving the Parents

A person came to the Prophet and said that he wanted to participate in Jihad (striving in the way of Allah which may end in armed struggle). The Prophet (PBUH) asked him if his parents were alive. He replied in the affirmative. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered him to look after them, serving them with the spirit of Jihad (intense striving with all one's might and resources).

Mutual help

A believer is to another believer as the foundation bricks which support and sustain one another. Then he intertwined his fingers of one hand with those of the other, demonstrating how they keep united together.

Who is a Muslim?

A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand Muslims are safe.

Perfection of belief

None of you can be a Muslim unless and until he likes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.

The (sweet) taste of belief

Whoever possesses these three qualities shall taste the sweetness of belief and faith:

1. He must be Loving the Allah and His Apostle the most.
2. His love of his brother must be selfless - only for Allah's sake.
3. To fall into unbelief should be as abhorrent to him like falling into fire.

Desireable deeds

People asked the Prophet (PBUH) which deed Allah likes the most. The Prophet (PBUH) replied. "That which is perpetuated, though not much weighty quantitatively."

"Take up for action (devotional act) only as much as you can easily do."

PROHIBITION OF UNDERTAKING OF BURDENSOME ACTS

1. The Prophet saw a rope hanging in a house. On questioning, he was told that such and such woman has put it up to prevent her from dozing off during her devotional acts. The Prophet ordered its removal adding that devotional acts (super erogatory) should be stopped when sprightliness departs.
2. The Prophet (PBUH) was informed about a woman of Bani Asad tribe that she spends the whole night in the act of worship acts. He ordered them to stop that practice and take up only as much as their physique could agreeably stand.

The Prophet questioned Abd-Allah bin 'Amr bin' As about his routine of fasting during the day and beeping up the whole night. Abd-Allah confessed the truth of the statement.

The Prophet ordered him not to do it in future. Fast for some days and give it up for sometime. Keep up part of the night and sleep the remainder. You have an obligation to your physique, your eyes, as well as your wife. Pay heed to all these obligations, having due regard for all these basic rights.

Labour approved, begging forbidden

The Prophet said : "If somebody were to bring a bundle of fuel wood on his back for sale, it would be better for him than his begging with people paying him something or ignoring him.

Enviably Persons

The Prophet (PBUH) said : Two persons are enviously :

17. Who was given worldly goods and also the grace to spend it on permitted things.
18. One blessed with wisdom, himself guided by it and lending others also with it.

The best moral teaching

19. Take to righteousness.
20. Develop mutual love.
21. Give glad tidings to people from Allah.
Deeds alone cannot take anyone to heaven.

Forbidding evil traits and developing fraternity

"Beware! Do not make suspicion your habit. It is falsehood all over. Do not give ear to baseless talk. Do not pick holes in others. Do not nurse malice among yourselves and do not turn away from any one. Live together like brothers (as you really are, being servants of Allah).

The rights of the neighbour and the guest

Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not cause distress to his neighbour. And he who believes in Allah and the Day of Reckoning, should honour his guest.

Speaking and Silence (Keeping Quiet)

Whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, should say something pleasing, otherwise should keep mum.

The Guarantee of Salvation from the Prophet

If anybody gives me guarantee of that between his jaws (tongue) and also of that between his two thighs, I can guarantee the paradise for him.

Teaching Patience and Gratitude

If you happen to come upon one who is superior to you in worldly goods and looks, you should also look at the one who is inferior to you in respect of these bounties of Allah on man.

Who is a real Wrestler

One who subdues another is not a real stout and sturdy person. The really strong man, a wrestler, is he who suppresses his anger in a moment of heat (upsurge of emotions).

The guidelines for Da'is (those calling to faith)

The Prophet (PBUH) had despatched Mu'az bin Jabah (R) and Abu Musa (R) to reach Yemenites their Faith. When departing, he instructed them to make things easy for them and not make them troublesome. Give them glad things but do not make their Faith loathsome to them. And live among them freely mixing together and on good friendly terms.

The effect of love (attachment)

A person will be with one whom he loves.

Treatment to be meted out to the prisoners, the indigent and the sick

"Manage release of the prisoners, feed the hungry, and look after the ailing (in every possible manners).

The Reward of Planting a Tree

If somebody planted a tree whose fruit eaten by men and animals, it will be counted as sadaqah (charity) for the person planting it.

Sympathy and Compassion towards Animals

The Prophet related the story of a traveller who was on his way when he became thirsty. He happened to come to a well without a bucket or rope available anywhere. He got down the well and quenched his thirst. When he came out he saw a dog licking moist earth with its lolling tongue. He was touched and said to himself, the dog is thirsty like I was a moment earlier. So he got down into the well once again and brought water in his sack for the poor thirsty animal and quenched its thirst also. Allah was pleased with this act of kindness to animals and forgave him his sins, (thus ensuring salvation for him in the Hereafter).

The companions asked him : "Shall we be rewarded for kindness shown even to animals, O Apostle of Allah! The Prophet replied : "Every living

being is worthy of compassion and kindness for which you shall be rewarded."

Teaching and moral training of the slave girls

Abd-Allah died leaving behind minor daughters. I married a widow to impart these (orphaned) girls the proper education and teach them manners.

Who is a Hypocrite

The following four evil traits make a man a perfect hypocrite. If any of them is traceable in one's character one is infected with hypocrisy to that extent:

22. Whenever one speaks it is falsehood.

23. Never fulfils a promise.

24. Does not honour a pledge.

25. In quarrelling one stoops to foulness of tongue.

Who would be entitled to stay under the shade of the Great Throne on the Day of Judgement

1. A Just king
2. The young man given to devotional acts in youth.
3. The person whose eyes welled up with tears with remembrance of Allah in solitude.
4. The person whose heart remains occupied with the association of a mosque, (in it or thinking of it when out).
5. Both those persons whose mutual love is for Allah alone.

6. The person whom a beautiful, high placed girl invites to herself but he says that he fears Allah and seeks refuge in Him.
7. Once who offers charity to the indigent and the needy so secretly that his left hand is unaware of what the right hand has given. (Charity not for show but Pleasure of Allah).

Obedience to Rulers

26. If somebody is displeased with the king on any issue, it is better for him to built up patiently with it. For, even slightly moving away from obedience will entitle him to the death of the days of pre-Islamic Jahiliyah or Un-Islam.
27. You will experience, after me, deplorable conditions and thing most unpleasant to your Islamic taste. His companions asked the Prophet (PBUH). "What are your orders for us under such circumstances? He said in reply : "Go on fulfilling your obligations to him. (the corrupt ruler) and for your own (usurped) rights pray to Allah."

The Role of the Elite in Public Affairs

"You may go and let your outstanding men put up the case before me."

The outstanding Persons Represent the Community

The elite of the community came to the Prophet (PBUH) and submitted to him that the community has

agreed to be represented by us and it is with their consent that we are here.

Protection to be offered to the Alien Community living in a Muslim State under a pledge of Loyalty

If a Muslim murders a non-Muslim living under protection of the Muslim state under a contract, he will not smell the fragrance from the paradise, said to be effective from long distance - coverable in forty years in a report.

LIFE IS VALUABLE AND DESIRE TO DIE IS ITS UNDER VALUATION

No one (a Muslim) should nurse a wish for death. If he is righteous, he is likely to progress further in righteousness. And if he is wicked it is possible for him to repent and become virtuous (even in the last stages of his life under compulsion of events).

THE TWO BLESSINGS THAT OFTEN GO UNCARED FOR

There are two bounties of Allah that most people neglect. They are (1) sound health (2) Prosperity and Plenty of the resources.

EXCELLENCE OF PAYING A DEBT

The Prophet had to return a camel which he had borrowed from somebody. The creditor came to him demanding it. The Prophet purchased one better than his camel and handed it over to him, saying : "The really

virtuous and superior is that person who pays back his debts beautifully (more liberally than usual).

THE TRUE DEFINITION OF WEALTHNESS

Affluence does not lie in abundance of riches but it is a state of man's heart when he is totally independent of love of all wordly goods.

EQUALITY IN GENERAL

No Arab enjoys any excellence compared to an 'Ajami (non Arab), nor a non-Arab is superior to an Arab anyway. Similarly, a fair-complexioned person is not superior to a dark-skinned one and vice versa. Excellence for superiority lies only in '*Taqwa*' (fear of the displeasure of Allah).

MERCY ABOUNDING

Whoever does not show mercy to others shall not be the recipient of Mercy from Allah.

EXCELLENCE OF LEAVING INHERITANCE FOR THE SURVIVORS

It is better for you to leave your inheritors independent rather than leaving them penniless beggers.

EXAMPLE OF THE FINER SEX AND AMUSING THEM FOR AGREEABLE RELATIONSHIP

Woman is like a rib (curved normally) which can be broken in an attempt to straighten it out. But it is possible to make use of it curved as it is. (Cleverly handling a woman in as much as letting her have her own way according to her particular bent of mind. She can harmlessly cooperate and help a lot in running a household and bringing up children nicely).

WOMAN'S POSITION IN A HOUSEHOLD

A woman is the ruler in her husband's house and over her offspring.

THE HIGH POSITION OF ONE WITH DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF THE QURAN

A person who has gone deep into the Quran pondering (over) its words, meanings, the background and the broad principles about the nature of this scripture, will be with the revered chosen and virtuous messengers (angels).

THE WORLD NEEDS TO TURN BACK AGAIN TO THE SAME 'MERCY OF THE WORLD'

As logical results of its criminal negligence towards the message of Muhammad's teachings the world again has fallen prey to the same anxieties and the agonizing restlessness as it suffered in the past before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, the only Mercy for all the worlds. A close look at the present gloom, disorder, confusion and a wider variety of discriminations the world's different systems are reflective of offers unrefutable testimony to this phenomenal worldwide reality. Much as its all pretensions to the human racial equality and the equal human rights the western world still continues to be far too below the manner. Should it have a look in the mirror, it may see the glaring blots of open, outrageous and fragrant violations of human rights, prejudices and biased and false discriminations on its terrible face.

To come out of the practices of wrong doings, barbarism, racial, religious and geographical pride and prejudices, fear, restlessness and intellectual confusing disorder the world today stands in dire need to seek refuge in the only all including mercy of the last Prophet (PBUH). Were it that the world learn again its forgotten lesson and come to terms to his noble, equal and indiscriminating teachings and which is always prepared to provide a fuller protection to all human beings without the slightest discrimination whatsoever. May Allah bless His messenger with uncountable and unmeasurable mercies and blessings on the Prophet Muhammad, the unlettered, the Mercy for all the worlds. Being in his permanent slavery undoubtedly is highest honour to us.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNEQUALED PATIENCE, FORTITUDE AND COURAGE

اشد الناس بلاءً الانبياء ثم الامثل فالامثل

Amongst the people the most to suffer the hardships being the Prophets (peace be upon them all). Then those who are closer to them (in respect of faith and character), and then those closer to them.

**Great tragic events in the life of the prophet
Muhammad SAW**

CLOSER TO HIM, MORE TO BE PUT TO TESTS AND TRIALS

HEAVIER TRAGIC EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE PROPHET (SAWS)

Childhood and Youth

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was born in Makkah into the tribe of the Quraysh in 570 C.E.. He died at the age of 63 in 632 C.E. in Madinah. Makkah was then inhabited mainly by the tribe of the Quraysh. In those times, this tribe enjoyed great prestige all over Arabia and the neighbouring countries, for Makkah was a flourishing trade and religious centre.

Muhammad suffers orphanage even prior to his birth

Muhammad (SAW) was still in his mother's womb when his father, Abdullah, died. Soon after his birth, Aminah, his mother, sent the baby to Abdul Muttalib, his grandfather, who *was* overjoyed to receive him, for he had loved Abdullah, Muhammad's (SAW) father, very much. The grandfather gave him the name "Muhammad", meaning "the praised one." As was the practice of the Makkan nobility; he was handed over to a wet nurse, Halimah al-Sadiyya, who belonged to the Banu Sa'd tribe. This custom is still practiced among the Makkan aristocracy.

Muhammad (SAW) remained in the charge of Halimah until the age of five. He learned Arabic in its purest form from her tribe.

After five years of desert life, Muhammad (SAW) returned to his mother Aminah, who took him to Yathrib (now known as Madinah) to meet her uncles, the Banu al-Najjar. After a month's stay in Yathrib, Aminah set out again for Makkah, but, on the way, she fell ill and died.

The orphan Muhammad (SAW) was then taken care of by his grandfather Abdul Muttalib, the chief of the Quraysh, who looked after him with great affection. As leader of the Quraysh, he used to sit on a cushion in the Kabah, and whenever Muhammad (SAW) joined him, he was allowed to sit on that cushion. Abdul Muttalib, died when Muhammad (SAW) was just eight years old.

Now the guardianship of Muhammad (SAW) passed to Abu Talib, his uncle, who was a merchant. Once when Abu Talib was preparing to go to Syria on a trading journey Muhammad (SAW) expressed a keen desire to accompany him. Though he was rather young to undertake such a difficult journey, Abu Talib was so full of affection for him that he could not refuse, and agreed to take him along.

By the time Muhammad (SAW) reached adulthood, he was well-known in Makkah for his good morals, gentle disposition and sincerity. He was called Al-Amin (trustworthy) and As-Sadiq (truthful) by his compatriots.

When Muhammad (SAW) was twenty-five, a rich 40-year old widow, Khadijah, entrusted him with the management of her business. She used to employ men to engage in trading on her behalf, and rewarded them with a

share of the profits. Muhammad (SAW) was so honest in all his dealings that she was deeply impressed by his virtues and expressed her desire to marry him. After consultations with his uncle, Muhammad (SAW) accepted the proposal of marriage.

Revelations Begin

With the passing of years Muhammad (SAW) became less and less interested in business and devoted more and more of his time to the search for truth by means of reflection and meditation. He would often go to mount Hira, three miles from Makkah, where he stayed in the cave there, lost in thoughts for hours. He sought answers to the mysteries of life. What is man's true role in life? What does the Lord require of us as His servants? From where does man come and where will he go after death? This phase of Muhammad's (SAW) life is referred to in the Qur'an in this verse.

“Did He not find you wandering and gave you guidance?” (Al-Duha, 93:7)

At the age of 40, the angel of the Lord appeared before him bringing the lint message from Allah.

The angel said to him “Read.”

The Prophet replied, I do not know how to read.”

Then Muhammad (SAW) felt that his body was being squeezed hard. Then the angel released him and repeated the same command. Again Muhammad (SAW) replied that he did not know how to read. Then the angel again squeezed him and then released him for the third time and said: Read.”

Then the angel Jibril revealed to him the chapter *Al-Alaq*.

"Read! In the name of your Lord, who created: created man from a clot (of blood); Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know." (*Al-Alaq*, 96:1-5)

The Prophet trembled in fear at what he had seen and heard in the cave. The revelation had been a totally new experience for him. Immediately after the disappearance of the angel, he set off home.

On arrival, the Prophet asked Khadijah to wrap him in blankets. He was shivering with high fever. When he calmed down, he related the whole incident to her.

Khadijah, being very kind and understanding tried her best to reassure him.

Khadijah then suggested that they should go and consult her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal, who had become a Christian hermit.

Waraqa heard the whole account from Muhammad (SAW) and said:

"I am sure that the angel who descended on Moses has descended on you. You will be abused, and you will be pursued. I wish I could be alive to give you my Support when your people will turn you out."

Will they ruin me out?" The Prophet found this difficult to believe. Waraqa replied that people have always turned against those who are recipients of Allah's messages.

The First Believers

The Prophet's wife, Khadijah, was the first convert to Islam. When the news of Muhammad's (SAW) prophet hood reached his freed slave, Zayd bin Haritha, who was 30 years of age, and his cousin Ali, who was about eleven, both declared their faith in Islam. Abu Bakr, the Prophet's friend from childhood, also professed his faith.

This small group of the faithful were the first believers of Islam. In the first stage, the Prophet was asked to spread the message of Islam quietly to avoid arousing any hostility. Abu Bakr, being an influential merchant, was able to bring some of his friends, also rich merchants, into the fold of Islam. But the majority of the conversions took place among the weak and the poor.

In the second stage, the Prophet received the command from Allah to spread the message publicly, but first to his own kin.

For this purpose, he invited his family members to a meal at his house. It was Ali who managed the food. After they had taken their meal, the Prophet put his message before them: that Allah had made him His messenger and that they should extend their cooperation to him so that he could fulfill this responsibility of prophet hood.

No one among the elders was ready to help the Prophet. Only Ali, who was a child of 10-12 years, stood up and said: I take your responsibility, O Messenger of Allah!" On hearing Ali's response, the Prophet smiled and said, "You O Ali, you O Ali!"

The First Public Call to Islam

According to Arab Custom, people used to ascend a hill when they had to announce some important news. So the Prophet, with his all-important tidings, climbed up on a hillock called Safa, situated near the Kabah. He then called out to the people, who all gathered around him. Then he addressed them thus: "If I tell you that a big army is hiding behind that mountain and is ready to attack you, will you believe me?" They all chorused, "Of course, we will, for we trust you. We know you always tell the truth." Then the Prophet said:

"Allah has commanded me to warn you, my kinsmen, that you should worship none but the one and only Allah. If you fail to do so, you will mine Allah's wrath. And I will not be able to do anything to help you, even though you are my kinsmen."

Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, became very angry and said:

"Woe to you on this day! Did you assemble us for this?"

Some remarked that he had gone mad. Soon they all dispersed without caring to give any thought to the words of the Prophet.

Early Hardships

There was one main reason for the Quraysh to reject the Prophet. Makkah was a centre of pilgrimage because of the Kabah, which housed 360 idols of the neighbouring tribes and nations. Since Islam believed in

only one Allah, the Quraysh feared that once the concept of one Allah became popular, the tribes would stop visiting the Kabah to pay homage to the idols. This would deprive them of the respect they commanded as guardians of the Kabah. People in great numbers from the neighbouring tribes used to visit Makkah all the year round to make offerings to the idols. This brought prosperity to Makkah, for trade flourished side by side with the pilgrimage. Makkah being a desert, no agriculture or economic resources existed there. The Kabah was their only asset. But, not all of the Makkans were hostile. There were people who gave serious thought to the message of the Quran and gradually began to accept Islam. In that period, about 200 People from Makkah as well as the neighbouring settlements entered the fold of Islam.

The Quraysh, who enjoyed the Makkan leadership, considered the teachings of the new religion an insult to the religion of their forefathers. In Islam they saw a danger to their own leadership. Such leaders as Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab were the most hostile to the Prophet.

The chiefs of different clans gathered to discuss this matter. They all felt that if Abu Talib did not come in their way, they would have no difficulty in finding a solution to this problem. So they all came to Abu Talib to tell him to stop Muhammad (SAW) from spreading his message.

They warned him, "Tell Muhammad (SAW) to stop spreading his message, or you will abandon him. If you fail to do so, you should be ready to suffer for the deeds of your nephew."

Abu Talib, an old man, felt that he would not be able to resist their wrath. So he told Muhammad (SAW)

what the Quraysh chiefs had said to him and then added, "My dearest nephew, look to your own safety, and to the safety of your uncle, and do not cause me to carry a burden I cannot bear."

For a while the Prophet stood motionless. On the one hand, there was his old uncle weakened by the people's opposition, and on the other hand, there was the responsibility to proclaim the truth till his last breath. So he decided to discharge his duty whatever the cost. In a firm and calm voice, and with tears in his eyes, he said:

"O Uncle! By Allah Almighty I swear that even if they were to place the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left hand, I would not give up my mission. I must go on carrying it out till I die."

Abu Talib, touched by the sincerity and force of the words uttered by his nephew remained motionless for a while. Then he turned to the Prophet and said:

"My nephew go your way. Do your duty. Let my people turn against me. I am with you. No one shall harm you as Long as I live."

Opposition Intensified

When the Quraysh saw that the pressure on Abu Talib had failed, they decided to make life unbearable for the Prophet and his followers. Slaves, the weakest sections of society, were the worst sufferers. Their masters beat them brutally and some of them were beaten to death. But they suffered all this patiently. Abu Bakr spent much of his wealth on freeing these slaves.

Even the wealthy Muslims were not spared. They were also persecuted. Their own relatives turned against them.

The Makkan did all that they could to turn people away from the Prophet. But, in spite of all their efforts, Islam continued to spread. Some of the powerful men of Makkah accepted Islam. Hamzah, the Prophet's uncle, Umar ibn Al-Khattab, who was famous for his bravery and Abu Dharr Ghifar, were among them.

The Makkan chiefs were more enraged than before. They made life so difficult for the Muslims that a number of them migrated to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), a nearby country, with the Prophet's permission. At first fifteen men and women migrated to Abyssinia slowly, the number reached 83.

This safe haven of the Muslims made the Makkans all the more angry. They sent two of their men to Negus, the king of Abyssinia. These men brought him precious gifts and requested him to turn these 'ignoble' people out of his land as they had forsaken their forefather's religion to follow a new religion. Negus sent for the Muslims and asked them to explain their case. Thereupon, Jafar, son of Abu Talib, briefly explained to him the teachings of Islam and recited some portions from the Quran from the chapter called 'Mary'. Negus was very impressed and said:

"Go forth into my kingdom; I shall not extradite you at all."

Then he turned to the Makkans and said:

"Go away, I cannot give up these people. They are following the true faith."

Social Boycott

With the passage of time, the Makkan chiefs became more and more bitter. They felt that it was the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) clan, the Banu Hashim, headed by Abu Talib, that was responsible for all this misery and that if they had given up the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), all his activities could have been stopped without delay. They made it known to the Banu Hashim that if they did not surrender Muhammad (SAW) to them, they would have to suffer the consequences.

The tribes of Makkah entered into an agreement. They agreed to cut off all dealings with the Banu Hashim. No one was to sell anything to them. The agreement was signed and hung up in the sacred Kabah. This was the seventh year of the prophet hood.

This period of boycott was one of great hardship for the Banu Hashim and the Muslims. While this ban was in force, Abu Talib, the chief of the Banu Hashim, had to take refuge in a narrow valley which came to be known as Abu Talib's Pass. For three years, the Prophet and all his relatives lived in this valley. Many of the Muslims joined them. Since all supplies to the valley were cut off, the Banu Hashim had to live on the leaves and roots of trees.

Finally, certain kind-hearted Makkan leaders took pity on the Banu Hashim. The agreement was annulled and the Banu Hashim could come back to their homes. But soon after this, Abu Talib, the Prophet's uncle, died. His health had deteriorated during the three years of hardship. Although Abu Talib had not accepted Islam, as head of his clan he had protected the Prophet from his opponents. After his death, Abu Lahab, another uncle of the Prophet,

became head of the Banu Hashim. He was the most bitter enemy of Islam and the Muslims. He made it clear to the Quraysh that the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) no longer enjoyed his clan's protection. In those days, it was impossible for an individual to survive without the protection of his clan.

Khadijah, the faithful wife of the Prophet, also died soon after the ban was lifted. Both these deaths took place in the both year of the prophet hood. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "Mary the daughter of 'Imran, was the best among the women (of the world of her time) and Khadijah is the best amongst the women (of this nation)."

The loss of Abu Talib and Khadijah saddened the Prophet, for they had been great sources of strength to him. It was their deaths that made the enemy bold enough to persecute him. One day when the Prophet was praying in the Kabah, Abu Jahl put a piece of cloth round his neck and twisted it hard. He would have strangled the Prophet had not Abu Bakr rushed to his help in time.

The Journey to Ta'if

Day by day, the situation worsened. So the Prophet decided to go to Ta'if a neighbouring town, 40 miles from Makkah to spread the teachings of Islam. He spoke to the leaders of the town and invited them to accept Islam. They paid no heed to his message. They were such evil people that they did not stop at chat. When the Prophet was leaving the town in a dejected state, he was chased by Street urchins instigated by these chiefs. They abused him and threw stones at him as he walked out of town. They

continued to pelt him with stones until he escaped under cover of the darkness of the night. He stopped on the way in an orchard to rest. He was badly hurt, bleeding profusely. Yet he only prayed for the guidance of his assailants. He did not curse them. In all humility he addressed Allah in these words:

"Oh, my Allah! To You I complain of the feebleness of my strength of my lack of resources and of my being unimportant in the eyes of people. Oh, Most Merciful of all those capable of showing mercy! You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my own Lord. To whom do You entrust me; to an unsympathetic folk who would suddenly frown at me, or to an alien to whom You have given control over my affairs? Not in the least do I care for anything except that I may have Your protection for myself. I seek shelter in Your light — The Light that illuminates the Heavens and dispels all sorts of darkness, and which controls all affairs in this world as well as in the Hereafter. May it never be that I should incur Your wrath, or that You should be displeased with me. I must remove the cause of Your displeasure until You are pleased. There is no strength nor power but through You.'

Aishah once asked the Prophet "Have you ever experienced a day harder than the day of the battle of

Uhud?" He replied, "The hardest treatment I met from them was on the Day of 'Aqabah when I went to Ibn 'Abd Yalil bin 'Abd Kulal (who was one of the chiefs of Ta'if) with the purpose of inviting him to Islam, but he made no response (to my call)."

The Migration to Madinah

The Prophet used to convey the message of Islam to the people coming from outside Makkah. People from Yathrib (renamed as Madinatun-Nabi, the Prophet's city) had started to accept Islam.

In the thirteenth year of Prophet hood, seventy two Muslims from Yathrib came for the Hajj. On behalf of their people they invited the Prophet to make Yathrib his home. These men from Yathrib pledged to protect the Prophet from his enemies. For all this sacrifice they only wanted one assurance from the Prophet: that when the Prophet gained power, he would not leave them and return to Makkah. The Prophet replied:

"You have that assurance. I am yours and you are mine."

Now the Muslims began to emigrate to Yathrib in large numbers to escape persecution at the hands of the Quraysh. Only the Prophet, Abu Bakr and a few Muslims were left in Makkah.

This infuriated the Quraysh, for Islam was now strengthening its root in Yathrib. There was nothing more dangerous than that. So they resolved to remove the danger once and for all. They said: "Kill Muhammad (SAW) and Islam will die with him."

The young men with whom the Quraysh planned to carry out the assassination, duly collected in that fateful night. But before they could put their plan into action, Allah, having conceived of a different plan for the Prophet, commanded him to leave for Madinah. And who can overrule Allah's plan? Accordingly, the Prophet—after giving Ali all the people's deposits to be returned to them made Ali lie down in his bed, while he himself left the house at midnight.

Before dawn, the Prophet, accompanied by Abu Bakr, left Makkah and, about five miles from the city the two men took shelter in a cave called Thawr. When the Makkans learnt of the Prophet's escape, they were mad with rage. They offered a reward of a hundred camels to anyone who captured the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and a number of horsemen immediately raced Out into the desert. Some of them even managed to reach the very mouth of the cave of Thawr. Abu Bakr was stricken with fear lest they harm the Prophet. But the Prophet reassured him, saying:

“Fear not. We are not two only in this cave.

There is a third — Allah.”

The Prophet and Abu Bakr lay hidden in this cave for three days and three nights. On the fourth day they came out and continued the journey. Their guide for this dangerous journey was Abdullah ibn al Uraiqit, a non-Muslim, who was a friend of Abu Bakr.

Love for Humanity

The first problem faced by the Prophet was that of the Makkan *muhaajirs*. They had neither homes nor money.

Most of them had been well-to-do in Makkah, but they had left everything behind them. So the first important thing for the Prophet to do was to settle them in their new surroundings.

The solution to this problem was found in the concept of brotherhood in Islam. The Prophet collected the Muslims and suggested that one Ansar (Madinan Muslim) and one *Muhajir* (Makkan Muslim) should become linked together as two brothers.

The Muslims of Madinah immediately accepted the suggestion of the Prophet. Each Ansar took one Makkan Muslim as his brother. This bond between the two became even stronger than a blood relationship. The Ansar gave his Makkan brother half of everything he possessed – house, land, money and other belongings.

The Prophet gave his first sermon after migration to Madinah on the first Friday at the Mosque of Jumu'a while he was travelling from Quba to Madinah. He said:

1. Worship Almighty Allah.
2. You should be truthful in your life.
3. Love everyone in your society.
4. Fulfill the promises and commitments you make.
5. Differentiate between the lawful and the unlawful in your life.
6. Behave in a good manner with others.

The Prophet, after being tortured and forced by the Makkans to migrate, did not mention any kind of revenge but instead talked about spreading love, peace and humanity among the people of Madinah.

Makkan Opposition

Prophet was a man of peace and reconciliation. He urged his Companions to ask Allah for peace. For the Prophet's main task was the communication of the divine message to the people. And an atmosphere of peace and goodwill was essential to perform this duty. But the Quraysh did not allow him to work in peaceful conditions. When they saw that the Muslims were becoming increasingly stronger, they resolved to wage war and crush them altogether.

THE DECISIVE BATTLE OF BADR

In the second year of the *hijrah*, during the month of Ramadhān, the Muslims came up against the infidels in the decisive battle of Badr which was to prove the turning point not only in the destiny of Islam but of the entire human race.

That all the conquests gained, laurels won and empires founded by the Muslims come from the triumphant success achieved by the handful followers of Islam at that crucial moment, Allah has identified it as the Day of Discrimination.

“If you believe in Allah and that which We revealed unto our slave on the Day of Discrimination, the day when two armies met.”⁹¹

The circumstances that led to this battle were that the Messenger got the news that a great caravan with lots of money and merchandise, was being led by Abu Sufyān on its way back to home from Syria. A state of belligerency already existed between the Muslims and the Quraysh, for the latter were doing all in their power to play the mischief with Muslims, to impede their progress and to liquidate their rising power. They were sparing none of their financial and physical resources to get on the job and their armed detachments very often waded deep into the limits of Madina and its pastures to pounce upon the Muslims.

Now, Abu Sufyān was the worst enemy of Islam and, therefore, the Messenger asked the Muslims to get ready to intercept the caravan. Since, however, it was a commercial caravan and the Messenger merely wanted to surprise it, elaborate arrangements required for giving fight to an army were not considered necessary.

Informed of the Prophet’s decision to intercept him, Abu Sufyān sent a courier to Makkah with an urgent request for reinforcements. Thereupon an armed force was hastily collected by the Quraysh—all the notable chiefs of Makkah accompanied the force to which was enlisted every man available from the neighbouring tribes—and this army went forth to the succor of their caravan. The Quraysh were so flared up that hardly a man remained behind in Makkah.

⁹¹ Q. 8:41.

Faithfulness of the Ansar

News came to the Messenger that a strong Makkan army was on its way to engage him in battle. The Messenger thereupon summoned his followers and asked for their advice. He really wanted to know the reaction of the Ansār, for, their original compact with him implied their defending him in Madina and did not put them under an obligation to take part in a military expedition outside their territory. The Muhājirin responded first and assured him of their help and loyalty. The Messenger, however, repeated his question and the Muhājirin gave the same reply but the Messenger put the same question again for the third time. Now the Ansār realised that the question was meant for them. S'ad b. Mu'ād immediately got up to say in reply, "O Messenger of Allah, it seems as if you mean us and you want to have our answer. Perhaps you think, O Messenger of Allah, that the Ansār have undertaken to help you on their own territory alone. I want to tell you on behalf of the Ansār that you may lead us where you like; align with whom you may desire or break relations with whom you may think fit; you may take whatever you desire from our property and give us as much as you want; for, whatever you would take from our property would be dearest to us than what you would leave for us. We would follow whatever you would command us. By Allah, if you go ahead until you reach Bark Ghimdān⁹², we will accompany you, and by Allah if you plunge it to the sea, we will also plunge with you."

⁹² A place in Yemen. Others say that it is the farthest point of *Hijr. Suhayli*, (the commentator of Ibn Hisham) says that

Then Miqdad got up and said, "O Messenger of Allah, we will not say as the Children of Israel said to Moses: Go thou and thy Lord and fight, we will sit here;⁹³ we will fight with you on your left and on your right, in your front and in your rear."

The Messenger was delighted to hear the replies given by his Companions.. He said, "Go ahead and have glad tidings."⁹⁴

Enthusiasm of the Youngsters

When the detachments went out from Madina, a boy of sixteen, whose name was 'Umayr b. Abi Waqqas also accompanied the warriors stealthily because he feared that if the Messenger saw him, he would turn him back as a minor. When his elder brother, S'ad b. Abi Waqqas saw 'Umayr avoiding the gaze of the Messenger, he asked him the reason for it. 'Umayr replied, I am afraid that the Messenger of Allah would turn me back as a minor but I want to take part in the battle. Allah may Perhaps honour me with martyrdom." When the Prophet saw Umayr he asked him to go back but he started crying and was allowed to stay on. Umayr was killed in the battle and thus his heart's desire was fulfilled.'

according to certain exegetes it was a city in Abyssinia. It, thus, meant a far off place. It has been mentioned as Bark-al-Ghimad by Ibn Hisham (Zad al-Ma'ad Vol. I, p. 342).

⁹³ Q.5:24.

⁹⁴ Zad-al-Maad, Vol. , I. pp. 342-43, In Hisham, Vol. 1, p. 614. Bukhari and Muslim have also related the conversation with a little variation.

Strength of the Contending Parties

The Messenger rallied forth to the battlefield with three hundred and thirteen combatants who were not even well-equipped. The Muslims had seventy camels and two horses on which men rode by turns;⁹⁵ there was nothing to distinguish the soldiers from the captains, not even the eminent Companions like Abu Bakr and 'Umar or the Prophet himself bore any mark of distinction.

The standard of the army was given to Mus'ab b 'Umayr, the flag of the Muhājirin was with Ali, and that of the Ansār with S'ad b. Mu'adh.

On coming to know of the approaching Muslim army, Abu Sufyān turned off his caravan towards the sea-coast. He also sent word to the Qurayshite army, when he was at a safe distance from the Muslims, to go back home as it was of no purpose for them to proceed ahead. Makkans, too, wanted to return home but Abu Jahl insisted on going ahead for punishing the raiders. His force was a thousand strong with all the veterans and noted battlers of Makkah, and all were too well-armed. He did not want to lose the opportunity of giving a battle to the Muslims.⁹⁶ On coming to know the names of the Makkan chiefs accompanying Abu Jahl, the Messenger remarked:

“The Makkah has brought its pieces of heart to you!”

⁹⁵ Zad-al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 342.

⁹⁶ Zad-al-Ma'ad, Vol. 1, p. 343 and Ibn Hisham, Vol. 1. pp. 618-19.

The Democratic Way

The Qurayshite army halted on reaching a wadi near Badi while Muslims pitched their tents on the farther side of the enemy. Hubāb b. al-Mundhir, however, called upon the Messenger to enquire: "O Messenger of Allah, is this a place which Allah has ordered you to occupy, so that we cannot leave the place, or is it a matter of opinion and military tactics?" "No", replied the Messenger, "it is a matter of opinion and military tactics and everything can be done to ambush the enemy." Hubāb then said,

"O Messenger of Allah, it is not the place we should occupy." He suggested another place nearest to the water which was more suitable for giving battle to the enemy. The Messenger agreed and ordered his men to move on there.⁹⁷

The Messenger and some of his Companions were first to occur the new camping ground in the night; a cistern was built and filled with water from which the enemy was also allowed to replenish its drinking-vessels.⁹⁸

Allah sent down rain during the night which caused infidels great inconvenience by hindering their movement. But, it revived the vanishing spirits of the Muslims by making the weather pleasant and turned the soft sand of the wadi into a compact surface.

This was a sign of victory as Allah has disclosed in this verse of the Qur'an.

"And sent down water from the sky upon you, that thereby He might purify you, and

⁹⁷ Ibn Hisham, Vol. 1, p. 621.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 622.

remove from you the fear of Satan, and make strong your hearts and firm (yours feet thereby.”⁹⁹

The Messenger as a General

We find, on this occasion, the Messenger exhibiting marvelous qualities of a military tactician and strategist which chime with his eternal and universal guidance of mankind, providing yet another indication that the inspiration drawn by him was from the supernatural agency.¹⁰⁰ The way he drew up his troops battles, the actions he took to meet the sudden and surprise attacks by the superior forces and the deployment of his troops to win the battle against the enemy superior in numbers need be studied to appreciate the prodigious military genius of the Messenger.

Preparation for the Fighting

A, booth of palm-branches was erected for the Messenger on an elevation overlooking the battlefield. Thereafter, the Messenger traversed the plain and pointed out the spots to his Companions where the enemy chiefs were to fall dead. As it was found later on, his prediction proved entirely correct for not a single

⁹⁹ Q. 8:II.

¹⁰⁰ A detailed account of the defensive and offensive measures taken by the Messenger of Allah at Badr can be seen in the Hadis-i-Dif'a by Maj. General Muhammad (SAW) Akbar Khan, a Pakistani General, and the Al-Rasul-al-Qaid by Mahmud Shit Khattab, the ex-Commander-in-chief of the Iraqi Armed Forces.

Qurayshite chief was found slain at a place different from that indicated by the Messenger of Allah.

When the two armies came up face to face, the Messenger said, "O Allah, here come the Quraysh in their vanity and pride: they contend with You calling your Messenger a liar."

This was the night of Friday, the seventeenth of Ramadan. With the first flush of the morning, the entire force of the Quraysh streamed out into the valley and ranged itself in the battlefield while the Muslims arrayed themselves before them in the foreground.¹⁰¹

Prophet's earnest Entreaty to the Lord

The Messenger set the ranks of his force in order and returned to the hut with Abu Bakr. Putting his head on the dust, he supplicated and beseeched Allah for divine help. He knew full well that if the victory in the battle was to go by numbers and strength, prowess and weapons of the two forces, the result was a foregone conclusion. He had no illusions for he fully realised that the Muslims were weak and few, and the enemy strong and numerous. He clearly saw the balance inclining in favour of the Quraysh; and now he sought to counterpoise it with a heavier weight. He beseechingly entreated the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who shapes all ends and the means, to come to the assistance of Muslims in that hour of difficulty. He appealed to Allah: "O Allah! If Thou were to exterminate this small group of Muslims, Thou wilt be worshipped on earth no more!" In a state of extreme

¹⁰¹ Zad al- Ma'ad, Vol. 1, pp. 343-344.

exaltation, his hands raised in prayer and on bended knees, he sent up the prayer: "O Allah! Fulfill what Thou hast promised to me! Help us Thou, O Allah !" So lost was he in the prayer that the mantle on his shoulder fell on the ground. Abu Bakr, who was too distressed to see the Messenger of Allah in tears, consoled and comforted him.¹⁰²

The True Position and Station of the Muslims

The prayer of the Messenger, although brief, speaks volumes of his pure-hearted Companions, his unflinching confidence in Allah in the hour of crisis, his feeling of humbleness and meekness before Allah and the serenity of his own heart. At the same time, the Messenger's prayer sets forth, in terms as clear as crystal, the true position and station of his followers amidst the nations of the world; it brings out the worth, utility as well as the requisiteness of the people who are charged with the responsibility of taking his mission ahead. It is, in fact, a plain and clear annunciation that the responsibility lying on these people is to surrender to the Will of Allah, to bend down their

¹⁰² See Zad al-Ma'ad and other biographies of the Messenger. Muslim relates (in Kitab-ul-Jihad wal-Siyar) on the authority of 'Umar b. al-Khattab that "on the day of Badr when the Messenger camped with his three hundred and nineteen Companions, he turned towards the Qjbla and, raising his hands, started imploring Allah: "O Allah! Grant me the help which Thou didst promise me'. O Allah! Grant me what Thou hast promised to me. O Allah! If this small group of Muslims is exterminated today, Thou -wilt be worshipped on earth no more!"

necks before Him with a contrite heart and to summon the people to yield their obedience to Him.

And, the Messenger's prayer was answered by Allah with a resounding victory which was beyond the bounds of every reason and probability. It was but a demonstration of the truth of his affirmation about the true character of his followers.

The Messenger then came back to his men and delivered a short speech stressing the merits of fighting in the way of Allah. In the meantime 'Utba b. Rabi'a and his brother and son, Shayba and Walid, stepped forward in the fashion of the Arabs. Three of the Ansār came forward to give them battle, but the Quraysh asked, "Who are you?"

"We are Ansār", they answered.

"You are of noble blood," said the Quraysh, "but send our peers; the men of our own tribe."

The Messenger now said, "Go ahead, O 'Ubayda b. al-Hārith, Hamza and 'Ali: Advance! all three of you to oppose them."

The Quraysh then said, "Yes. You are noble and our peers."

Now 'Ubayda being the eldest, challenged 'Utba b. Rabi'a, Hamza faced Shayba and 'Ali came full tilt against Walid. With swift dispatch, Hamza and 'Ali slew their opponents, but 'Ubayda and 'Utba still struggled with one another. Hamza and 'Ali then made a dead set at 'Utba and did away with him. They bore away and brought 'Ubayda back to their ranks for he had been bally injured. Later on 'Ubayda died of the excessive loss of blood.'

‘Umayr, then, took some dates out of his quiver and began to eat them, but suddenly he said, “If I live till my dates last, it would mean delaying it for long.” So he threw away the dates in his hand and ran to the battlefield and fought with the enemy until he was dead. He was the first martyr on the day of Badr.¹⁰³

The Muslims fought the Makkans like a firm, united and disciplined army with the name of Allah on their lips. Up to the moment the Messenger had remained quiet and collected, but now he charged into the ranks of the enemy. None was now braver than he, none dared engage the enemy so closely.¹⁰⁴ Allah now sent down hosts of the angels to the help of the Muslims; the enemy seemed to be giving way to the Muslims and was driven back by the fierce charge of the invisible battlers.

“When thy Lord inspired the angels, (saying)
I am with you. So make those who believe
stand firm. I will throw fear into the hearts of
those who disbelieve. Then smite the necks
and smite of them each finger!”¹⁰⁵

The Ambition of two Brothers

Full of enthusiasm, everybody seemed to be bent upon outdoing others in a deed of valour and to be honoured with martyrdom. Even close friends and full brothers vied with one another to excel the other. ‘Abdur Rahmān b. ‘Auf says, “I was fighting in my rank on the

¹⁰³ Zad al-Ma’ad, Vol. 1, p. 345 and Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 215.

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 425.

¹⁰⁵ Q. 8:12.

day of Badr, when, lo! I saw on my right and left two very young boys; and I did not feel quite happy to see them on my sides.¹⁰⁶ Suddenly, one of them asked me in a low voice, so that his companion should not hear: O my uncle! Show me Abu Jahl!— I said: O my brother's son! What have you to do with him?—He answered: I have vowed before Allah that I shall kill him when I see him, or shall be killed by him!—And the other boy spoke to me likewise in a low voice, so that his companion should not hear. I pointed him out to them, and they threw themselves upon him like two hawks, and struck him down. And they were the sons of 'Afrā'.¹⁰⁷

When Abu Jahl was killed, the Messenger of Allah remarked, "This is AbūJahl, the Pharaoh of this nation."

The Great Victory

The day of Badr drew towards its close with the Muslims hushed with success and the infidels trampled in the dust. On this occasion the Messenger paid homage to Allah, saying: "Praise be to Allah Who fulfilled His promise, and helped His servant, and alone routed all the hordes."

That was exactly what had happened, for the Qur'an also says: -

¹⁰⁶ Abdur Rahman would have expected grown up men with him who could be expected to assist him in the fight.

¹⁰⁷ Sahihaian, The incident quoted here has been taken from Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi, see Gazw'a Badr. Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 444.

“Allah had given you the victory at Badr, when you were contemptible. So observe your duty to Allah in order that you may be thankful.”¹⁰⁸

The Messenger ordered that the dead among the infidels should be thrown into a pit. As the Muslims threw them, the Apostle went there and said standing over the pit: “O people of the pit, did you find that what your Lord said is true? For I have found that what my Allah promised me is true.”¹⁰⁹

On the day of Badr, seventy infidels were slain and an equal number was taken captive.

Casualties among the Muslims were fourteen, six belonging to the Muhājirin and eight to the Ansār.¹¹⁰

Effects of the Victory of Badr

The Prophet returned to Madina at the head of a victorious army. The enemies of Islam were appalled and disheartened by the victory at Badr: the Messenger’s prestige rose in Madina and his influence gained a hold upon the surrounding district. A large number of persons who had been hesitant so long in Madina accepted the faith of the Messenger. Abdullah b. Rawaha was one of the two persons sent by the Messenger to Madina in advance, before he returned to the city. He gave the good news to the people, saying, “Rejoice O Ansār, for the Messenger of Allah is safe and infidels have been killed and captured”. He enumerated the names of the Qurayshite nobles and

¹⁰⁸ Q.3: 123.

¹⁰⁹ Bukhari, on the authority of Bara’ b. Azib.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 463.

chiefs killed in the battle to every man he met; children accompanied him Singing songs of joy; some took the news to be true while others were confounded. Then the Messenger returned to Madina followed by the prisoners of war with the Messenger's slave Shuqran keeping an eye on them.¹¹¹ When the Messenger reached Rāha, the Muslims met and congratulated him and his Companions on the victory Allah had given him.

The defeat suffered by the polytheists plunged Makkah in gloom: there was not a house in the city which did not go into mourning.¹¹² The Makkans stood aghast and agitated. Abu Sufi'ān swore that until he had fought with the Messenger again he would not take a bath. The suppressed Muslims of Makkah, on the other hand, breathed a sigh of relief and felt elated.

Ties of Blood or Faith

One of the captives was Aba 'Aziz b. 'Umayr b. Hashim, a full brother of Mus'ab b. 'Umayr. The two brothers were the standard bearers of the rival armies.

Mus'ab b. 'Umayr passed by his brother when an Ansāri Youngman was tying up the hands of Abu 'Aziz b. 'Umayr. Mus'ab called out, "Bind him fast, for his mother is sufficiently rich; perhaps she would pay a handsome ransom."

Turning to Mus'ab in amazement, Abu 'Aziz b. 'Umayr said, "Brother, is it you to give this counsel?" "You

¹¹¹ Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, pp. 170-73.

¹¹²

are not my brother”, replied ‘Umayr, “he is my brother who is tying up your hands.”

Treatment of the Captives

The Messenger ordered his followers to treat the prisoners generously. He said, “Deal kindly with them.” Abu ‘Aziz b. ‘Umayr relates that he was lodged with an Ansāri family after being brought from Badr. They gave him bread for the morning and evening meals but themselves took only dates as ordered by the Messenger of Allah. If anybody had a morsel of bread, he gave it to Abu ‘Aziz although he felt ashamed and refused it, yet they returned it untouched and insisted on his taking it.¹¹³

Ransom of the Prisoners

The Messenger accepted ransom for the prisoners according to their means; the Qurayshite kinsmen of the captives paid sums of money for their relatives, while those who could not pay any ransom were set free without any payment. The Messenger’s uncle ‘Abbās b. ‘Abdul Muttalib, his cousin, ‘Aqil b. Abi Talib,’ his son-in-law, Abul ‘As b. Ar-Rabi, who was married to his daughter Zaynab, were among the prisoners of war but none was shown any favour; all were treated like other captives.

There were some prisoners who were unable to pay any ransom. But as they were literate, they were allowed to earn their freedom by teaching the art of reading and writing to the children of Ansār’—ten children being taught by very prisoner.’ Zaid b. Thābit was one of those

¹¹³ Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 475.

who had been taught by the captives of Badr. The importance attached to edification and enlightenment by the Prophet of Islam as exemplified by his decision on this occasion needs not further explanation.

THE BATTLE OF UHUD

Revenge – A Binding Obligation

The news of the disaster at Badr in which a number of Qurayshite nobles had fallen in the fray and the survivors had returned pell-mell to Makkah, was received with an utter dismay that completely bewildered the Quraysh. It had proved an unimaginable catastrophe for them. All those persons whose fathers, sons or brothers had been killed at Badr, met Abu Sufyān and others who had merchandise in the caravan brought back safely to Makkah. It was agreed to set aside the profits of the caravan for the conduct of a new war against the Muslims. The poets, as usual, began inciting the people with their songs of vengeance. To the pagan Arabs, blood called for blood in order to vindicate their honour.

A well-equipped army set out from Makkah to fight the Messenger in the middle of Shawwal, 3 A.H. The Quraysh had mustered an army of three thousand soldiers consisting of their own warriors and such of the tribes as would align with them. Their women went with them riding the dromedaries to stir their valour and prevent them from taking to flight.¹¹⁴ The nobles of the Quraysh also took their wives with them. The army advanced by easy stages and camped at the gates of Madina. The Messenger's plan was to remain in the city, leaving the invading army alone, and fight only when it decided to enter the city. He was not for going out of the city to face the enemy in the battlefield. 'Abdullah b. Ubayy, too,

¹¹⁴ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 60-62.

agreed with the Messenger, but some of the Muslims who had somehow missed the opportunity of engaging the enemy at Badr were more enthusiastic. They said, "O the Messenger of Allah, go forth, and smite our foes, otherwise they would think that we fear to leave the city and face them." While they kept on urging the Prophet in this wise, he went into his house and put on his coat of mail: The young men who had been keen on meeting the enemy outside the city repented on their unwise zeal when they saw the Messenger putting on the armour. Realizing their mistake, they begged the Prophet to follow his first counsel for they were mistaken in persuading him against his will. "If you wish to remain inside the city", they said, "we will not oppose you."

But the Messenger of Allah replied, "It befits not a Prophet, when once he has put on the armour, to lay it off until he has fought."¹¹⁵

The Messenger marched out with an army one thousand strong. But he had not gone far afield when 'Abdullah b. Ubayy withdrew with a third of the army's strength. 'Abdullah said to his comrades, "He disregarded my advice, but accepted theirs."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 63.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 63.

The Prophet takes the Position

The Prophet marched into the gorge of mount Uhud, about three kilometers to the north of Madina, and took up his position with the mount on his back.¹¹⁷

He also instructed his men, "Let none of you fight until I give you the word."

The Messenger then drew up his troops for battle, which numbered 700 men in all. On any adjoining mount he established 50 archers under 'Abdullah b. Jubayr and instructed them to keep the enemy cavalry away, for, he said, in no case should they be allowed to come on the Muslims from the rear whether the Muslims won the day or lost it.¹¹⁸ "Abandon not your position," he commanded them sternly, "even if the birds snatch up these men."¹¹⁹

The Messenger put up two coats of mail on the day of Uhud and gave the standard to Mus'ab b. 'Umayr.

Enthusiasm of the Youngsters

The Messenger had sent back two boys, Samura b. Jundub and Rafi' b. Khadijah, as they were but fifteen years of age. Rafi' was later allowed by the Prophet to join the troops on the recommendation of his father who said that Rafi' was a good archer. When Samura's turn came and he was asked to go back, he pleaded that the Prophet had allowed Rafi' although he could throw Rafi' in

¹¹⁷ To get a clear picture of the disposition of troops, see, *The Battlefields of the Prophet Muhammad*, by Dr. Muhammad Hamid Ullah, pp. 24-25.

¹¹⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 66.

¹¹⁹ *Zad al-Ma'ad*, Vol. I, p. 349 and Bukhari, *Kitab-ul-Maghazi*, Section 'Battle of Uhud'.

wrestling. Thereupon the two lads had about of wrestling in which Samura defeated Rafi', and he was also allowed to go to the battle.¹²⁰

The First Phase of Action

The battle began and each side hurled itself against the other, while a group of women, headed by the blood-thirst Hind, rattling tambourines with singing, urged the Qurayshite troops to deeds of valour. A general engagement ensued and the battle grew hot. Abu Dujana fought with the Messenger's sword, killing everybody who came up against him, and advanced deep into the enemy's ranks.¹²¹

Hamza and Mus'ab b. 'Umayr killed

Hamza fought gallantly and killed a number of notable Quraysh leaders. Nobody was able to stand his dashing charge. But, Wahshi, the slave of Jubayr b. Mut'im, was watching the movements of Hamza, for he had been promised freedom by his master on the condition that he killed Hamza. Jubayr's uncle Tu'ayma had been killed by Hamza at Badr, while Hind had also urged Jubayr to get Hamza killed by Wahshi. At last, Wahshi got his chance and took Hamza unaware. An expert javelin thrower as he was, he launched his javelin at Hamza, piercing the lower part of his body. Hamza staggered, then he collapsed and dropped dead.'¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 66.

¹²¹ Ibid, pp. 67-68.

¹²² Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 70-72. Wahshi later narrated the event as related in the Sahih Bukhari, Section : Battle of Uhud.

Mus'ab b. 'Umayr entrenched himself in the defense of the Prophet, exhibited singular courage in the thicket of the battle and kept the attacking infidels at bay. He fell, at last nobly discharging the duty he owed to Allah and His Messenger.¹²³

Victory of the Muslims

Allah fulfilled the promise He had made to the Muslims. The history of Badr was repeated once again; a number of the Quraysh nobles fell in succession and their troops took to their heels. The Muslims found Hind and her Companions forget their songs and running away tucking up their garments.¹²⁴

The Table Turns on the Muslims

The Quraysh had suffered an obvious rout. The ignominious retreat of the enemy troops and the women accompanying them taking to their heels made the archers certain of their victory. Uttering shouts of glee, they deserted their post to despoil the enemy camp. 'Ahdullah b. Jubayr, the leader of the archers, reminded his men of the command given by the Messenger, but none was prepared to listen to him. So certain were they of their victory that return of the enemy running away for its life seemed inconceivable to them. And, then, the situation changed. No longer carried by the flying charge of arrows, the 'Makkan cavalry found its way to the unprotected rear

¹²³ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 73.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

of the Muslim army.¹²⁵

The standard-bearers of the Quraysh had been killed; their standard was lying in the dust and nobody dared come near it. Suddenly, the Quraysh came smashing through the Muslim rear and someone called out: 'Ha, Muhammad (SAW) (peace be upon him) has been killed.' The Muslim troops, bounded upon the fugitives, turned back to face the enemy in the rear; the decamping 'Qurayshite soldiers were emboldened and returned to resume

their attack on the Muslims. The situation now became too critical for the Muslims; the enemy was bent upon taking full advantage of the opportunity afforded to it.

The surprise and confusion overtaking the Muslims was as sudden as the two-pronged attack by the Makkans was violent. The Qurayshite troops led, by 'Abdullah b. Qumiyah and 'Utba b. Abi Waqqas, made a bold charge and reached well nigh the Messenger. The Muslim troops began to waver, several were honoured with martyrdom; and the Messenger was hit with a stone.

Prophet's tooth got smashed his blessed lip injured

He fell on his side, one of his front teeth was smashed, his face was scored, and his lip was injured. The blood running down his face was wiped by the Messenger, saying the while, "How can a people prosper who have

¹²⁵ Zad-al-Ma'ad, Vol. I., p. 350.

stained their prophet's face with blood for he summoned them to their Lord?" ¹²⁶

The majority of the Muslim soldiers had been scattered and nobody knew where the Prophet was. 'All took hold of the Messenger's hand while Talha b. 'Ubaydullah lifted him up until the Prophet got on his feet. Mālik b. Sinān was so carried away that he even licked the blood flowing from the Messenger's face.

The Muslims had actually neither fled away nor had they been discomfited. Their flanks had folded up and so they had to make good of their retreat in order to gather their strength for facing the suddenly changed situation. It was, no doubt, a day of test and trial for the Muslims in which they lost a number of their gallant warriors and angelic comrades of the Messenger, but, all this had come to pass because of the mistake of the archers who had exposed the Muslim flank. They had disobeyed the Messenger by abandoning the post on which the Messenger had stationed them.

"Allah verily made good His promise unto you when you routed them by His leave, until (the moment) when your courage failed you, and you disagreed about the order and you disobeyed, after He had shown you that for which you long. Some of you desired the world, and some of you desired the Hereafter. Therefore, He made you flee from them, that He might try you. Yet now He has forgiven you and Allah is Bounteous to the believers."¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 78-80.

¹²⁷ Q. 3 : 152.

Devoted Companions Sacrifice their lives to defend the Prophet (SAWS)

The battle of Uhud also gave occasion to the reflection of worthiness and ardent affection of the Companions for the Prophet. Two rings from the metal chain strap of the helmet put on by the Messenger had been driven into his cheek. Abu 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrah pulled out one of the rings and one of his front teeth dropped out; he pulled out another ring and another tooth dropped out. Abu Dujana leaned over the Messenger to shield him from arrows until many were stuck in his back. S'ad b. Abi Waqqas stood by the Messenger shooting arrows in his defense, while the Messenger handed him the arrows one by one, saying, "Shoot, may my father and my mother be your ransom."¹²⁸

Qatada b. al-Nu'mān got a blow on his face which made one of his eyes come out of its socket. The Prophet restored it to its place with his own hand and it was so completely healed that its eye-sight became better than that of the other one.¹²⁹

The blood-crazy infidels surged toward the Messenger; they were ready to die a hundred times for killing the Messenger, but Allah had willed it otherwise. Ten of his Companions laid down their lives, one by one, defending him. Talha b. 'Ubaydullah protected the Messenger from the arrows shot by the enemy with his hands, until his fingers bled profusely and his hands were palsied. The Messenger wanted to climb up a rock on

¹²⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 80-82, Bukhari.

¹²⁹ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 82.

the mountain. He tried to get on it but could not do so owing to weakness caused by the injuries. Talha b. 'Ubaydullah squatted beneath him and helped him to climb up the rock. The Messenger performed the noon-prayer on the rock sitting, because of the wounds he had received.¹³⁰

When the Muslims had been taken by surprise and dispersed by the enemy horsemen prodding them on the one side and the foot-soldiers on the other, Anas b. an-Nadr⁴⁰ continued to fight valiantly; advancing far into the enemy ranks. S'ad b. Mu'ād happened to pass by him and he asked, "Whither you intend to go?" Anas b. an-Nadr replied, "S'ad, I inhale the fragrance of Paradise from the hill of Uhud."¹³¹

Anas b. an-Nadr came by a few Ansār and Muhājirin who were sitting gloomily. He asked them, "What makes you sit there?"

"Alas! The Prophet of Allah has gone to glory", they replied.

"Then what's the use of living after him?," answered Anas b. an-Nadr, "Come, let us die for what the Prophet gave his life." Anas then advanced to make a dead set at the enemy and died fighting like a hero. His nephew, Anas b. Malik, later on counted seventy wounds his uncle had received that day. Actually, it was difficult to recognise the corpse of Anas b. an-Nadr. It was his sister

¹³⁰ Uncle of Anas b. Malik, the personal attendant of the Prophet.

¹³¹ Zad al-Maad, Vol. I, p. 350.

who identified him by a special mark on the tip of a finger.¹³²

Ziyad b. as-Sakan and five others of the Ansar were holding off the enemy bearing down upon the Messenger. The friends of Ziyād fought and died, man by man, and Ziyad fell disabled with numerous wounds. The Messenger asked certain persons to bring Ziyad near him and made his foot a support for Ziyād's head. Ziyad died in that condition keeping his cheeks on the Prophet's foot.¹³³

'Amr b. al-Jamuh was lame of a leg. He had four sons, all of them were young and sturdy, and each was anxious for taking part in the battle. On the day of Uhud 'Amr b. al-Jamuh expressed his desire to go to the battle field, but his sons requested him to remain at home, saying that Allah had excused him. He called upon the Messenger and told him that his sons wanted to prevent him from taking part in the jihad.¹³⁴ "Yet, by Allah, I wish to be slain so that I may stroll lamely in the Paradise," said 'Amr b. al-Jamuh. The Messenger replied, "Allah has not made jihad incumbent on you;" and to his sons he said, "What is the harm if you allow him to go?" 'Amr b. al-Jamuh, went with the army and was killed in the battle.¹³⁵

Zayd b. Thābit relates that on the day of Uhud the Messenger asked him to seek out S'ad b. ar-Rab'i and ask S'ad, after conveying his greetings to him, how he felt at

¹³² Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 83.

¹³³ Ibid, p. 81.

¹³⁴ Lit. An effort or striving: Fighting in the way of Allah. It may be defensive or offensive, but solely for a cause just and right.

¹³⁵ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 353.

the moment. Zayd searched for S'ad b. ar-Rab'i and found him lying wounded among the slain breathing his last. Zayd counted seventy cuts of swords and arrows and javelins on his body. Zayd conveyed the message of the Messenger to S'ad b. ar-Rab'i to which he replied, "Convey my greetings to the Prophet and tell him that I am inhaling the fragrance of Paradise." "And tell my people" continued S'ad b. ar-Rab'i, "you would have no excuse with Allah if the enemy lays its hand on the Messenger of Allah while you still live and breathe" S'ad had hardly finished his message when he relinquished his life.¹³⁶

Before departing for the battle of Uhud, 'Abdullah b. Jahsh had thus implored Allah, "Upon, Thy Word, O Allah, tomorrow I shall fight the enemy. They ought to slay me, rip up my belly and cut off my nose and ears. Then Thou should ask me what for had it happened? And I would give the reply: For Thee, My Lord."¹³⁷

Muslims Regain Confidence

A new life was up into the Muslims when they found that the Messenger was still alive. Many of them pulled round him and took him up towards the glen. Ubayy b. Khalaf caught-up with the Messenger's party and said, "Muhammad, (peace be upon him) if you escape, I will be doomed " The Messenger, however, asked his Companions to let him alone, but when Uhayy insisted on coming near the Messenger he took the lance from one of

¹³⁶ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 353.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

his Companions. Then, turning to face him, the Messenger thrust it in the neck of Ubayy b. Khalaf who fell from his horse going head over heels.¹³⁸

On reaching the mouth of the glen, 'Ali brought water in his shield and Fatimah washed the blood from the Messenger's face. However, his wounds were still bleeding 'Ali burnt a piece of mat and dressed the wounds of the Messenger with its ash and then the bleeding stopped.¹³⁹

'Aisha and Umm Sulaym brought drinking water on their backs in leather bags for the wounded¹⁴⁰, while Umm Sulayt drew water for them.¹⁴¹

Hind b. 'Utba and the women with her mutilated the dead bodies of Muslims and cut off their ears and noses. Hind cut out Hamza's liver and chewed it, but as she could not swallow it, she threw it away.¹⁴²

Before ordering his army to retire, Abu Sufyān ascended a hillock and shouted, "Victory in war goes by turns: one wins today and the other tomorrow - Glory be to Hubel." The Messenger told 'Umar to get up and say in reply, "Allah is the Highest and Most Majestic; none exists besides him. Our dead are in paradise and yours in hell."¹⁴³ Abu Sufyān came out with the reply "We have the idol 'Uzza while you have none." The Prophet, again,

¹³⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 84.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 85, Bukhari and Muslim, Section, Battle of Uhud.

¹⁴⁰ Bukhari, Section, Battle of Uhud.

¹⁴¹ Bukhari, Section, Umm Salit.

¹⁴² Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 91.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p. 93.

directed his Companions to say in reply, "Allah is our Lord but yours is none."¹⁴⁴

Before Abu Sufyān departed, he called out, "We shall meet again at Badr next year." Thereupon the Messenger asked a companion to say, "Yes, it is an appointment between us."¹⁴⁵

The people searched their dead and gave them a burial. The Prophet was visibly moved by the death of Hamza, his uncle as well as foster-brother, who had always been a source of strength to him.

The Exemplary Endurance

Safia bint 'Abdul Muttalib was full-sister of Hamza. When she came forward to see her brother, the Prophet asked her son, Zubair b. al-'Awwām, to send her back so that she might not see her brother's dead body which had been mutilated. Accordingly, Zubair said to her, "Mother, the Prophet wants you to go back." She replied, "Why? I know that my brother has been mutilated but it was for the sake of Allah. I hope a goodly return from Him and shall be patient, if Allah wills." She went to see her brother and prayed for him. Then the Messenger ordered that he should be buried in Uhud, where his grave still exists.'¹⁴⁶

Burial of Mus'ab b. Umayr

The standard-bearer of the Prophet on the day of Uhud was Mus'ab b. Umayr. Before his conversion to Islam he was one of the best dressed young men of

¹⁴⁴ Bukhari, Section, Battle of Uhud.

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 94.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 97.

Quraysh brought up in the lap of luxury. Only a piece of coarse cloth could be found as a shroud for his burial when he was slain in the battle of Uhud. The cloth was so small that when his head was covered his feet got disclosed and when his feet were covered, his head was exposed; so the Messenger said, "Cover his head and put some rushes over his feet."¹⁴⁷

The Messenger directed to shroud the martyrs in pairs and ordered to lower the corpse of that martyr first in the grave who had learnt more of the Qur'an. While the martyrs were being buried, he said, I shall be a witness unto them on the Day of Resurrection." He also ordered to bury them in the condition in which they had fallen.'¹⁴⁸

Loving Regard for the Prophet (PBUH)

On their way back to their homes certain Muslims passed by a woman whose husband, brother and father had been killed at Uhud. When she was told of their death she asked, "Tell me first about the Messenger?" The people

¹⁴⁷ Bukhari, Chap., Battle of Uhud.

¹⁴⁸ Bukhari, Battle of Uhud. There is no difference of opinion in regard to burying the martyrs, without washing them, so that they present themselves before Allah in the condition they were slain. As for the burial service, Imam Malik, Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmad do not

consider it necessary while Imam Abu Hanifa (and others like Imam Awzai, Sufyān, Thauri, Ishaq b Rahuway) say that the burial service should be performed. Imam Ahmad also relates a tradition about the offering of burial service over the martyrs. Bukhari has also related a Tradition on the authority of Uqbah b. 'Amir that once the Prophet went to Uhud and recited burial prayer for the martyrs.

replied, "Thanks Allah, the Messenger is safe." But she was not satisfied and asked whether she could herself see the Messenger. When the people brought her to the Messenger she said, "Now that you are safe, every adversity is gone."

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Devotion and Faithfulness

The Makkan army had departed from Uhud but they had not gone far away when the people were heard complaining against one another and accusing their leaders for withdrawing without pressing home their advantage. On the other hand, the Prophet decided the very next day, which was Sunday, to set out in pursuit of the retreating enemy. It was the time when most of the Muslims were tired and wounded, but the Messenger sent a crier to announce that everybody who had been present in the battle of Uhud should get ready to pursue the enemy. None demurred, none protested; every Muslim who had fought at Uhud the day before followed the Messenger on his way out of Madina in spite of his fatigue and wounds. The Prophet bivouacked with his followers at Hamrā' al-Asad, about 13 kilometers from Madina, where he remained from Monday to Wednesday. The Prophet returned when there was no more any possibility of the enemy's return.¹⁵⁰ The dutiful compliance of the Prophet's command by his Companions at this difficult hour exhibits their love for him felt all too deeply which has been made

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 99.

¹⁵⁰ Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, p. 97.

immortal by Allah through the exquisite expression of the Qur'an.

"As for those who heard the call of Allah and His Messenger after the harm befell them (in the fight); for such of them as do right and ward off (evil), there is great reward.

"Those unto whom ____ said: Lo! the people have gathered against you, therefore fear them. (The threat of danger) but increased the faith of them and they cried; "Allah is sufficient for us! Most Excellent is He in Whom we trust!"

So they returned with grace and favour from Allah, and no harm touched them. They followed the good pleasure of Allah and Allah is of infinite bounty.

"It is only the devil who would make (men) fear his partisans. Fear them not; fear Me, if you are true believers."¹⁵¹

Precious as Apple of the Eye

In the third year after hijrah, the tribes of 'Adal and Qara sent an embassy to the Prophet asking for missionaries who could teach them the rudiments of faith. The Messenger sent them six of his Companions who included Asim b. Thābit, Khubayb b. 'Ady and Zayd b. Dathinna. When this party reached ar-Raji', a place

¹⁵¹ Q. 3: 172-75

between 'Usfàn and Makkah, the two tribes treacherously fell on them. The Muslims took out their swords to fight them but the assailants swore by Allah that they would not kill them. Three of the Muslims replied that they could not keep any undertaking given by the pagans; so they fought and were killed. The remaining three, Zayd, Khubayb and 'Abdullah b. Tariq surrendered. The last one also broke locks in the way but was killed by the polytheists while the remaining two were sold by them to the Quraysh. Hujayr b. Abu Lahab bought Khubayb to even the score of his father Ihäb and Zayd was purchased by Safwän b. Umayya to have his revenge for Umayya b. Khalaf.

When Zayd was taken out for execution, a number of Qurayshites, including Abu Sufyän, gathered to witness the barbaric spectacle. Abu Sufyän asked Zayd, "Verily, for Allah's sake, O Zayd, don't you wish that Muhammad (SAW) (peace be upon him) had now been in your place and you with your family?" "By Allah," replied Zayd, "I don't wish Muhammad (peace be upon him) to be hurt even by a thorn when I should be in sweet repose with my family." Thereupon Abu Sufyän remarked: I have never seen any man so much adored as Muhammad (peace be upon him) is loved by his Companions." Zayd was killed thereafter.¹⁵²

Then they brought Khubayb to crucify him. He asked his executioners to allow him to offer two rak'ats of prayer. Having performed the prayers in complete repose, Khubayb said to them, "Were it not that you would think

¹⁵² Ibn Hisham Vol. II, pp. 169-76, Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

that I only delayed out of fear of death I would have prolonged my prayer.” Then he recited these verses :

“I fear not which side I fall to depart;

It’s all for Allah who will bless the limbs taken apart.” Khubayb was stricken dead with the song of love on his lips.¹⁵³

Bi’r Ma’una

Another act of treachery took place shortly thereafter. A tribal chief, ‘Amir b. Mālik,. expressed the desire to have the doctrines of Islam explained to his people. The Messenger deputed seventy persons, some of whom were his eminent Companions, but when they reached the place called Bi’r Mauna, the tribesmen of Banu Sulaym, Umayyad, Ri’l and Dhakwān ambushed the party. The Muslims fought bravely and all but one were killed. K’ab b. Zayd returned to tell the story. He died in the Battle of Trenches.¹⁵⁴

Dying Declaration of a Martyr

One of the Muslims who was killed treacherously on this occasion was Harām b. Milhān. The words uttered by him at the time of his death brought about the conversion of his killer Jabbar b. Salma to Islam. Jabbar used to relate later on that what led him to accept Islam was that he attacked a man with his spear, and when he saw the point of his spear coming out of his chest, he also heard him crying, “By the Lord of K’aba, I have

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 174; Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp 123-25.

¹⁵⁴ Bukhari, Muslim and Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 186.

succeeded!" Jabbar further says that he wondered what sort of success it was. Was the man not killed by him? - Jabbar enquired from others who told him that the man had meant martyrdom and thus he was convinced that his victim had really been successful.¹⁵⁵

Expulsion of Banu an-Nadir

The Messenger approached Banu an-Nadir to demand a contribution to be paid as blood-money to the Bani 'Amir since two men had been killed inadvertently by the lone survivor of Bi'r Man'üa. Banu an-Nadir, being one of the two influential tribes of the Jews settled in Madina, were in alliance with Bani 'Amir and were thus liable to pay the blood wit. They feigned willingness to accept the demand with pleasure, but kept themselves busy in plotting against the Prophet. While the Messenger was asked to make himself comfortable by the side of a wall of one of their houses, they took counsel with one another, saying; "Never would you get such a golden chance. If some one of us drops a rock on him from the top of the house, we shall all get rid of him". Abu Bakr, 'Ali and 'Umar and a few more Companions were with the Messenger on this occasion.

Allah informed the Prophet of the treacherous plan of the Jews. He went back to Madina and ordered to make preparations for war against the Banu an-Nadir. Thus, the Messenger came upon them in Rabi' ul-Awwal, 4 A.H. The siege of Banu an-Nadir lasted for six nights whilst Allah

¹⁵⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 187.

cast terror in the hearts of the Jews. They requested the Prophet that if he agreed to spare their lives they would quit the city with their belongings except the arms. The offer was accepted and Banu an-Nadir departed from Madina after destroying their houses and loading all that they could on their camels.¹⁵⁶

The Surah al-Hashr (surah of Exile) in the Qur'an calls attention to the banishment of Banu an-Nadir.

"He it is Who has caused those of the people of the first exile. Ye deemed not that they would go forth, while they deemed that their strongholds would protect them from Allah. But Allah reached them from a place whereof they reckoned not, and cast terror in their hearts so that they ruined their houses with their own hands and the hands of the believers. So, learn a lesson O those who have eyes!"¹⁵⁷

Many of these exiles settled in Khyber, the Jewish centre in the north of Hijaz, others went away to the far off Syria, and the Muslims got rid of that sneaky dark corner of deception in their midst without having to meet the Jews in an open fight. The lands and groves left by the Jews were divided up among the first Makkan emigrants.

The Raid of Dhat-ur-Riqā

In the fourth year of the hijrah, the Messenger of Allah decided to make a raid into Najd. With six of his Companions, of whom Abu Musa al-Ashran was one, he made for an oasis in that area. The party had to cover the

¹⁵⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 187.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Qur'an 59:2.

distance mostly on foot, as only one camel was at their service. The incursion was called Dhat-ur-Riqa as the Companions taking part in the expedition had to bandage their injured feet and toes.¹⁵⁸

The Messenger's party approached the enemy, but there was no fighting for each feared the other. The Messenger led the prayer of fear in this expedition.¹⁵⁹

Who can now save you?

While the Prophet was on his way back to Madina, he happened to lie down to take rest under the shade of a thicket of acacia trees after hanging his sword to a branch.

Jabir relates that he was taking a nap along with his friends when they heard the Messenger calling them. They saw a Bedouin sitting by the side of the Messenger and when they went to him, he said, "I was sleeping when this man came and took hold of my sword. As I woke up I saw him with the sword drawn over my head, and he was asking me, "Who can now save you from me?" I replied, 'Allah'. Now he is sitting before you." The Messenger did not, however, punish the Bedouin.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Bukhari, Chap. Expedition of Dhat'ur-Riqa.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 204.

¹⁶⁰ Bukhari, Chap. Expedition of Dhatur Riqa.

THE BATTLE OF TRENCHES

The Battle of Trenches, or of Clans¹⁶¹, as it is called sometimes, took place in the month of Shawwāl, 5 A.H. The battle was accompanied with great difficulties and overcome with comparable courage: it forged and tested the fortitude and patience of the Muslims that was to prove of immense benefit to them not only in winning over the Arabian Peninsula to their faith but also in taking its message to the distant lands. It was a decisive conflict between Islam and un-Islam, between light and darkness, whereby the Muslims were put to the most severe trial never faced earlier by them. Depicting the situation, the Qur'an says :

“When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached to the throats, and you were imagining vain thoughts concerning Allah.

“There were time believers sorely tried, and shaken with mighty shock.”¹⁶²

The Jews were the real instigators of hostilities leading to the Battle of Trenches. Certain persons belonging to Bani an-Nadir and Bani Wā'il, who made no secret to see the Muslims uprooted, called upon the Quraysh at Makkah and invited them to extirpate the Muslims altogether. At first the Quraysh did not show much interest in the venture for they had already twice measured swords with the Muslims, but the Jews painted a

¹⁶¹ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 214.

¹⁶² Q.33:10-11.

rosy picture of the affair and promised support of all the Jewish settlements in Arabia for getting rid of the Muslims once for all. The Quraysh ultimately agreed to their suggestion. The deputation of the Jews then went to the great desert tribe of Ghatfân and urged them to join in the expedition for the destruction of Yathrib. They called upon all the clans of Ghatfân assiduously inviting them to join the Quraysh in their combined drive against Islam.¹⁶³

An alliance was thus formed between the Quraysh, the Jews and the Ghatfân to wage on all-out war against the Muslims. An important clause of the agreement made for the venture was that the Ghatfân would muster six thousand soldiers for the military operations while the Jews would give them a whole year's harvest of Khaybar to compensate for the expenses incurred by them. The Quraysh, on their part, agreed to contribute four thousand combatants. An army of ten thousand strong was thus mobilised and Abu Sufyân assumed command of the combined force.¹⁶⁴

Wisdom : A Lost Property of the Muslims

When the Prophet had hews of their design to wipe the Muslims out of existence, he conferred with his companion how to meet the threat. It was decided to fight a defensive war resisting time attack of the enemy on the city instead of facing the coalition in a pitched battle outside Madina. The Messenger assembled a force of three thousand men-at-arms for the defense of the city.

¹⁶³ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 214-15.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 219-20.

It was the Persian companion called Salman who advised to dig a trench on the side Madina lay open to cavalry attack.¹⁶⁵ This device was well-known to the Iranians.¹⁶⁶ Salman is reported to have said: "O Messenger of Allah, when we feared a charge by the cavalry we used to dig trenches to keep the invaders at bay." The Messenger agreed to his suggestion and decided to have a trench dug in the open ground lying to the north of Madina. The city was exposed only on that side and was well protected to the west, south and east by clumped plantations, volcanic rocky plains and granite hills, presenting a considerable obstacle to the progress of a mounted army.¹⁶⁷

The Messenger marked the planned ditch and assigned forty cubits of digging to every batch of ten persons.¹⁶⁸ The length of the trench was about five thousand cubits, its depth varied between seven to ten cubits and the width was normally nine cubits or a little more.¹⁶⁹

Enthusiasm and the Cooperative Spirit

The Messenger himself helped the parties digging the portions of the trench allotted to them. Although the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p.224.

¹⁶⁶ Khandaq, as the trench is called, is the Arabacised form of the Persian Khandak and Kandak.

¹⁶⁷ The trench lay in the north of the city, its eastern end began at *harrata Waqim* and extended up to valley of Bathan where the basalt plain of the west begins '(Abdul Quddus Ansari, *Athar al-Madina*).

¹⁶⁸ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 192.

¹⁶⁹ Ghazwah Azhab by Ahmad B. Shum'il.

winter season had set and was extremely harsh¹⁷⁰ and the impoverished Muslims had but little provisions to satisfy their pangs of hunger, the work proceeded smoothly owing to the enthusiasm, and perseverance of the volunteers.

Abu Talha relates that once when he was exhausted by hunger, he complained to the Messenger and showed his belly on which he had tied a slab of stone for allaying the uneasy sensation. The Messenger of Allah then showed him his own belly on which he had tied two slabs of rock!¹⁷¹

But, everybody was happy and cheerful in spite of these privations. The Messenger's Companions sang songs of pride¹⁷² and chanted praise to Allah to keep themselves busy in their task without a word of complaint on their lips.

Anas relates that once the Messenger came to the place where they were digging the trench. He saw the Ansār and the Muhājirin working hard to complete their work despite biting cold of the chilly morning for they had neither slaves nor servants to dig the trench for them. Seeing how they were labouring with their empty stomachs, the Prophet said: "O Allah, life is truly the life of Hereafter; so pardon the Ansār and the Muhājirin."

¹⁷⁰ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 216.

¹⁷¹ Mishkat al-Masabih, Vol. II, p. 448. It was a custom among the Arabs that when they felt unbearable pangs of hunger, they used to tie a slab of rock on their bellies in order to allay the uneasy sensation and to be able to do their work.

¹⁷² Called Rajz.

Overjoyed to hear the Messenger invoking forgiveness for them, the people present there said in reply:

“It is we who have pledged to Muhammad,
To fight in Jihad till the spark of life is
imbued.”¹⁷³

Anas further says that if one of them happened to procure a handful of barley, he used to grind and mix it with a little fat to be shared by all even if its smell and taste were disagreeable.

Miracle predicting a Bright Future

A large rock was causing great difficulty in digging the trench for it could not be broken by the pick. When the Messenger was informed he dropped down into the trench and gave such a blow with the pick that one-third of the rock has hewed asunder. Thereupon the Prophet said, “Glory be to Allah, the keys of Syria have been given to me.” With the second blow of the pick, the Prophet hewed another one-third of the rock and said, “Glory be to Allah, the keys of Persia have been given to me. By Allah, I see the white castle of Madā’in (Ctesiphon).”? In the third attempt, the remaining portion of the rock was broken to pieces. The Messenger then said, “Glory be to Allah, I have been given the keys of Yemen. By Allah, I can now see the gate of San’ā.”¹⁷⁴

At the time when this prediction was made, no prophecy could be more remote from the way things fall.

¹⁷³ Bukhari, Kitab ul Maghazi, Chap. Ghazwatul Khandaq.

¹⁷⁴ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 194.

The Muslims were then emaciated by meager diet and bleak weather and the army advancing against the not too well fortified city was threatening to deal a death blow to its defenders.

The Fiery Ordeal

The Muslims had hardly finished work on the trench when the Quraysh arrived and encamped outside Madina. They had ten thousand well-equipped warriors with them. Ghatfan had come with their confederate tribes and made their camp with the Quraysh. The Messenger assembled his three thousand men to face them, the trench intervening between the camps of the two armies. Bani Qurayza, the Jewish tribe of Madina, had made a treaty with the Messenger for the defense of the city. However, Huyayy b. Akhtab, who was the chief of Bani Nadir deported earlier from the city, coaxed Bani Qurayza into breaking the pledge made by them.

The Muslims were placed in a desperate position; the air of insecurity and fear enveloped the city. The faint-hearted hypocrites now showed white feathers; they even sowed seeds of discontent among the rank and file. The Prophet at once realised the dangerous plight of the Muslims in general, and that of the Ansār in particular, who had always had to bear the major brunt of war with the infidels. The Messenger, therefore, proposed that it might be worthwhile to make peace with Bani Ghatfan by giving them one-third of Madina's date harvest. The Messenger did not want the Ansār to have any more trouble for his sake. But Sad b. Mu'ād and S'ad b. 'Ubayda, the two chiefs of Aus and Khazraj, did not agree to the

suggestion. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, when we and the Ghatfan were polytheists and idolaters, neither serving Allah nor knowing Him, they got none of our dates except as guests or by purchase. Shall we give them our property after Allah has honoured us with Islam and you guidance? No, by Allah, we shall not give them anything but the sword until Allah decides between us."

"As you please," replied the Prophet and gave up the idea.¹⁷⁵

The Actual Fight -

The army of the Prophet pitched its tents behind the trench and kept a watch day and night. Beyond the trench, the allied forces laid a siege of the city but the stalemate continued, for a few days without any actual fighting between the two armies. The enemy cavalry rode ahead and, on coming nearer, suddenly saw a wide ditch. The unexpected filled them with consternation.

"A novel device, a wily ruse" they exclaimed in amazement. How was the ditch to be crossed, they asked one another—and decided to go round the trench to find where it was the narrowest. Some of them beat their horses so that they jumped over the moat and carried their riders into the territory of Madina. One of these was the well-known warrior, 'Amr b. 'Abdul Wood, who was considered a match for a thousand horsemen. After crossing the ditch, he stopped and challenged anyone to fight him.

¹⁷⁵ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 202-3.

‘Ali immediately sprang forward and said to him, “‘Amr, you declared to Allah that if a man of Quraysh offered you two alternatives you would accept one of them.”

“Yes, I did”, replied ‘Amr.

“Then,” said ‘Ali, “I invite you to Allah and His Messenger and to Islam.”

‘Amr replied, “It’s of no use to me.”

“Then I call on you to face me”, rejoined ‘Ali.

“Why”, said ‘Amr, “O son of my brother, by Allah, I do not want to kill you.”

“But,” retorted ‘Ali, “I do want to kill you.”

‘Amr was flushed with anger. He dismounted his horse and hamstringed it and slapped its face; then he made for ‘Ali. Amr fought; jostled with ‘Ali, made thrusts and parried, but ultimately ‘Ali cut off ‘Amr’s head with a sweeping slash of his scimitar. Two of his comrades who had stormed the trench with him darted back on their horses.

Ardent Zeal of Muslim Women

‘Aisha, who was then in the citadel of Bani Haritha with other Muslim women, was young enough to screen herself from men. She says that S’ad b. Mu’ād passed that way. He was putting on a coat of mail so small that his hands were fully exposed. He was reciting some verses when his mother told him to hurry up lest he should be late. ‘Aisha said to his mother, “Umm S’ad, by Allah, I wish that his coat of mail were longer.” The fear expressed by ‘Aisha ultimately proved to be well justified for S’ad was shot by an arrow on his arm and died of excessive

bleeding ¹⁷⁶ during the subsequent battle with Bani Qurayza.

Help from Allah

The siege continued for a month or so. The Muslims were hungry and weary while the besieging army was fully provided with arms and provisions. The hypocrites showed their true colours and many of them asked for the permission of the Prophet to go back to Madina on the pretext that they had come in a hurry leaving the doors of their houses unlocked. They simply wanted to pull out from the battle front.

The Messenger and his Companions passed their days in a nervous strain, harassed by the enemy in front and worried by the menace of the Jews in the rear. Then, suddenly one day Nu'aym b. Mas'üd, belonging to the Ghatfan, came to the Messenger and told him that he had secretly embraced Islam, and his own people did not know of it. He also offered to do whatever he was bidden. The Prophet replied, "You are the only man there, so remain with them and try to help us, for war is but an artifice and a clever device."

After taking leave of the Prophet, Nu'aym b. Mas'üd went off to Bani Qurayza with whom he talked in a way that they began to wonder whether they had taken a correct decision in abandoning the Muslims, their next-door neighbours, for the sake of the distant tribes like the Quraysh amid the Ghatfan. He advised them that it would be wise of them to demand some notable members of the

¹⁷⁶ Ibn K'athir, Vol. III, p. 207.

Quraysh and Ghatfān chiefs as hostages before joining their fight, so that they got a fair deal from their new allies. Bani Qurayza expressed their gratefulness to Nu'aym for his excellent advice.

Nu'aym then went to the leader of the Quraysh and after assuring them of his sincerity, told them that Bani Qurayza were unhappy on taking sides with them. They were thinking of demanding some of their nobles as hostages, by way of security, on the pretext that the promise made to them by the allies was not broken. He also said that the Bani Qurayza had actually sent word to Muhammad (peace be upon him) that they would hand over to him a few chiefs of the two tribes to prove their sincerity to him, so that he might cut off their heads. Nu'aym told the same story to the Ghatfan as well. The seeds of distrust thus sowed by Nu'aym between Bani Qurayza, on the one hand, and the Quraysh and the Ghatfān, on the other, made each cautious as well as suspicious of the other party. Abu Sufyān decided upon a general attack. When he tried to move the Jews to participate in the attack, they demanded hostages from the Quraysh and Ghatfan before pulling together with them. The stratagem of Nu'aym b. Mas'ūd proved a complete success. The Quraysh and the Ghatfān were convinced that the news brought by Nu'aym was entirely correct, and they promptly turned down the demand of the Jews. Bani Qurayza, on their part, became dead sure that their allies were not sincere to them. The discouragement suffered by the allied forces smashed their unity and exhausted their patience.

Then, in a cold and cloudy night, a violent hurricane from the desert uprooted the tents of the nomads and overthrew their cooking pots. The severe weather, sent by Allah, disheartened the enemy. Calling his men, Abu Sufyān said to them, O Quraysh, it is no longer a fit place to camp here. Our horses have died, Bani Qurayza have not kept faith with us and we have heard dreadful tidings of them. You can see the havoc caused by the gale; we have neither a cooking pot at its place, nor can lit a fire, nor have a tent standing, nor yet a shelter to bank on. Get you gone, for I have decided to go." Abu Sufyān then got up abruptly and going to his camel which was hobbled, mounted it and beat it, and he did not even free it from its hobble until it had stood up.

When the Ghatfān learnt that the Quraysh had departed, they also vanished in the darkness of the desert.

Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān, who had been sent by the Messenger to spy the movement of the enemy, returned with the news of the enemy's departure when the Prophet was offering prayers. He told the Messenger what he had seen.¹⁷⁷ No trace of the enemy was left by the break of the dawn when the Messenger and the Muslims left their camp, not to the trench, but to their houses in Madina, where they laid aside their arms.¹⁷⁸

This was a miracle worked by the mercy of Allah, as the Qur'an says about it:

"O you who believe ! Remember Allah's favour unto you when there came against you hosts, and We sent

¹⁷⁷ Muslim, Chap. Ghazwatul Azhab.

¹⁷⁸ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III pp. 214-21.

against them a great wind and hosts you could not see. And Allah is ever Seer of what you do.”¹⁷⁹

“And Allah repulsed the disbelievers in their wrath they gained no good. Allah averted their attack from the believers. Allah is Strong, Mighty.”¹⁸⁰

And then the billowy clouds which had coveted the heavens disappeared without any rainstorm or thunderbolt, leaving the sky of Madina clear as ever. The Messenger said to his Companions, “The Quraysh shall not come at you after this year, but you would attack them after that.”¹⁸¹

Seven Muslims laid their lives in the Battle of Trenches while four of the infidels were killed by the Muslims.

¹⁷⁹ Q.33:9.

¹⁸⁰ Q. 33:25.

¹⁸¹ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 221.

ACTION AGAINST BANI QURAYZA

Bani Qurayza's Breach of faith

Not long after his arrival in Madina, the Prophet got a covenant made between Ansār and Muhājirin to which the Jews were also made a party and guaranteed protection of life and property as well as freedom of professing their faith. The covenant, which was committed to writing, accepted certain rights of the Jews and also put them under certain obligations. Some of the important clauses of this covenant were as follows:

“Those among the Jews who side with us shall be liable to equality and help. Neither shall they be wronged nor shall their enemies be given any help. No polytheist of Madina shall afford protection to the property or life of any Qurayshite, nor shall he intervene against a believer on their behalf. The Jews shall bear the expenses of war, so long as the war lasts, like the believers. The Jews¹⁸² shall be considered as one community along with the believers—they shall have the freedom of their religion and the believers shall be free to follow their Faith. They shall have full freedom to deal with their allies and slaves and to settle their affairs.”

¹⁸² The covenant gives the names of various Jewish tribes of Madina like Bani Auf, Bani Sa'ida, Bani Jusham, Bani al-Aus and Bani Th'alaba who were made a party to the covenant.

The compact also made both the parties liable to help out another in the event of war, and, subject to the limits of divine injunctions, to promote mutual cooperation, goodwill and cordial relations between the confederates. One of its clauses provided that if Yathrib was attacked by an enemy, both the Jews and the Muslims shall join hands in its defense.¹⁸³

But, in spite of these clear undertakings, Bani Qurayza were won over by Huyayy b. Akhtab al-Nadir to go back on their words in order to help the Quraysh. As a matter of fact, when Huyayy b. Akhtab had come to Bani Qurayza for winning them over to the allies against the Muslims, their chief K'ab b. Asad had replied, "I have always found Muhammad (peace be upon him) truthful and trustworthy." However, K'ab b. Asad broke his word and absolved himself of every responsibility devolving upon him by the covenant.

When the Messenger heard of the betrayal of Bani Qurayza, he deputed a few persons including S'ad b. Maud and S'ad b. Ubayda, the two chiefs of Aus and Khazraj, to see if the report was correct. What they found out was that the situation was even worse than they had heard. Bani Qurayza spoke disparagingly of the Messenger and said, "Who is the Messenger of Allah? We have no pact or pledge with Muhammad (peace be upon him)."¹⁸⁴

Bani Qurayza then started making preparations for an armed conflict with the Muslims; they threatened to stab in the back and actually placed the Messenger and his

¹⁸³ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 503-4.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 220-23.

followers between the hammer and the anvil.’¹⁸⁵ Actually the situation would not have been so hazardous had the Jews declared their intention in the very beginning to fall out with the Muslims. The plight of the Muslims has been depicted picturesquely by the Qur’an :

“When they came upon you from above you
and front below you?”¹⁸⁶

It was but natural that the Muslims felt hurt by the perfidy of the Jews. How hard had it stricken the Muslims can be judged from the prayer sent up fervently by S’ad b. Mu’ad. The chief of Aus he had been in partnership with these Jews for many years and was, thus, their ally and sympathizer. When he was shot by an arrow which severed the vein of his arm, and he lost the hope of surviving for long, he supplicated to Allah, saying, “O Allah, do not let me die until I have set my eyes on the destruction of Bani Qurayza.”

Bani Qurayza Assailed

The Prophet as well as the Muslims laid their arms aside on return from the Battle of Trenches. An account of what happened thereafter, as related by the Traditions, is

¹⁸⁵ Writing about the action of the Jews on this occasion, W. Montgomery Watt writes in the Cambridge History of Islam: “The remaining large Jewish group in Madina, the clan of Qurayza, had been overtly correct in its behaviour during the siege, but had almost certainly been in contact with the enemy, and would have attacked Muhammad (SAW) in the rear had there been an opportunity.” (Vol. 1, p. 49).

¹⁸⁶ Q. 33:10.

that Gabriel came to the Prophet and asked, "O Messenger of Allah, have you put aside your arms?" When the Messenger replied that he had, Gabriel said, "But the angels have not put away their arms. "Allah commands you", continued Gabriel, "to march on Bani Qurayza. I am also to go-there to flutter them." Thereupon the Prophet got an announcement made that every one who listened and followed him ought to perform the 'asr prayer at Bani Qurayza.'¹⁸⁷

The Prophet besieged the district inhabited by the Jewish clan of Bani Qurayza. The beleaguered Jews defied the siege for twenty-five days after which they gave in and offered to surrender. Allah cast terror into their hearts.¹⁸⁸

Truth in Action

Bani Qurayza submitted to the Messenger's judgment but the people of Aus who had been long friendly with the Jews had a soft corner in their hearts for them. They said to the Messenger, "O Messenger of Allah, they are our allies against Khazraj and you very well know what they have done jointly with Bani Qaynuqa, the allies of our brothers." The Messenger listened to them patiently and then asked, "Would you agree to place the decision in the hands of an arbitrator from amongst you?" They agreed and the role was entrusted to their chief, S'ad b. Mu'ad.

When S'ad arrived, his, clansmen begged him to be lenient to Bani Qurayza; for, they insisted, the Messenger

¹⁸⁷ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 233-34. For a detailed version see Bukhari, Kitabul Jihad was Siyar.

¹⁸⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 235.

had made him umpire so that he might be considerate to his allies. When they persisted on their demand, S'ad h. Mu'ād replied, "Fate has brought this opportunity to S'ad; let him not be ashamed aught in fulfilling the commandment of Allah." Then, S'ad gave his decision: "I decide that the men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken as captives." The Prophet, on hearing the award of S'ad, remarked:

"You have awarded them Allah's decision."¹⁸⁹

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make you answer of peace, and open unto you, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto you, and they shall serve you. And if it will make no peace with you, but will make war against you, then thou shalt besiege it; and when the Lord thy Allah has delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword; but the women, and the little ones, and the cattle and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the ____ thy Allah has given you."¹⁹⁰

Benevolence and Large-heartedness

The Messenger sent some cavaliers to Najd on an expedition who captured Thumāma b. Uthāl, the chieftain

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 239-10. The words of the Prophet quoted in the Muslim are: "You have awaited them the Allah's decision" or the Prophet said, "The King's decision." (Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad was-Siyar).

¹⁹⁰ Deut, 20:10-14.

of Bani Hanifa. When the cavaliers returned to Madina they tied him to a stump in the Prophet's Mosque. Allah's Messenger came out to him and asked, "What do you expect, Thumama?" He replied, "If you kill me, Muhammad (peace be upon him), you will kill one whose blood will be avenged; if you show me favour, you will show it to one who is grateful; and if you want property, you will be given as much as you wish." The Messenger left him and when he passed next time by him he asked him the same question. Thumama repeated his earlier reply and the Messenger left him again. When the Prophet passed by him for the third time, he ordered Thumāma to be set free.

Thumāma went away to a grove of palm-dates and returned to the Prophet after taking a bath. He accepted Islam and said to the Messenger, "I swear to Allah, Muhammad (peace be upon him) that there was no face on the face of the earth more detested by me than your's, but now your face is the dearest of all to me. And, I swear to Allah that that there was no religion more hateful to me than your's in the entire world, but it is now the dearest of all to me. What happened to me is that your cavalry seized me when I was going to perform 'Umrah." The Messenger congratulated him and bade him perform the 'Umrah.

When Thumāma came to Makkah, some one asked him if he had turned a disbeliever. He replied, "No, by Allah, I have adopted faith on the hands of the Messenger of Allah. I swear to Allah that not a grain of corn will reach you from al-Yamamah until Allah's Messenger accords permission to it."

Al-Yamamah was the chief market of food grains in Arabia from where the Makkans used to import their requirements. When Thumāma went back to al-Yamānah he prevented the caravans to carry wheat to Makkah. The people of Makkah were so hard pressed by the ban imposed by Thumāma that he wrote to the Messenger requesting him to get the ban lifted. The kindhearted Messenger asked Thumāma to allow the supplies of food grains to Makkah.¹⁹¹

Expedition of B. Al-Mustaliq and incident of Ifk

After some time the Messenger led an expedition against Bani Lihyān and went up to the hills of Dhū Qarad in pursuit of some raiders, but there was no fighting. In Sh'abān, 6 A. H., the Messenger was informed that Bani al-Mustaliq were thronging for an attack on him. The Messenger went out with a force to face the enemy. A large party of the hypocrites, still skeptical and reticent, accompanied the Messenger with their leader Abdullah b. Uhayy b. Salūl. The hypocrites had never before gone out with the Messenger in such large numbers in any earlier expedition.¹⁹²

The failure of the Quraysh in the battle of Trenches when they had mustered all the warriors of their confederate clans for the destruction of Islam, had made the hypocrites bitter and sour, burning with the jaundice of their souls. The Muslims were gaining victory after victory, and this had sent the Quraysh, the Jews and their fellow

¹⁹¹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. 1, p. 377, Sahih Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad was-Siyar.

¹⁹² Ibn S'ad, Kitab ul Tabaqat al-Kabirah, Vol. II, part I, p. 45.

travelers among the pagans and hypocrites on the tenterhooks. They knew that the Muslims could not be humbled in an open combat by their enemies and hence the only way to checkmate them was through sowing dissension in their ranks and pitting them against one another. They also knew that the means they could put into requisition for undermining the confidence of the Muslims in Islam and its Messenger as well as creating a rift between them were disparagement of the holy Prophet and arousing pre-Islamic sentiments of tribal pride. With this in view, the hypocrites started a furtive campaign of casting reflections upon the honour of the Prophet. An entirely new hope of society had, however, been brought inexistence at Madina, whose members loved and respected every other man bound by the common ideal. These pretenders had, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that nothing could sap the foundations this ideological fraternity more effectively than a slanderous campaign aimed at creating misgivings about the leader of that gender and his family. Undoubtedly, this was a well-devised inspiacy of the hypocrites which was vigorously pursued during expedition of Bani al-Mustaliq, when, for the first time, as created earlier, a large number of them accompanied the Messenger. The Messenger met the enemy at a watering place of Bani Mustaliq, in the direction of Qudayd towards the shore, down as al-Muraysi,¹⁹³ where the battle brought Bani at-Mustaliq defeat and flight.

¹⁹³ The expedition is therefore also called as the expedition of Murays'i. See Tabaqat Ibn S'ad.

While the Prophet was still at this place, a hired servant of Bani Ghifār, belonging to the Muhājirin got into a row with another man, belonging to the tribe of Juhinah, which was an ally of al-Khazraj. The Juhini called out, "O you Ansār!" and the hired servant shouted, "O you Muhājirin." Abdullah b. Ubayy h. Salūl at once flared up and said to his friends who happened to be present with him, "Did they dare it? They set themselves against us in our own country and tried to outnumber us. By Allah, it is just the same as the ancient saying: Feed the dog and it will bite you. I swear by Allah that when we return o Madina those who are worthy and noble will drive out the unworthy wretches." Then, admonishing his men, 'Abdullah continued, "You have yourselves wrought it. You allowed them to settle in your country and shared your property with them. By Allah, had you held, back and not been so generous, they would have certainly gone elsewhere."

The Messenger came to know about the incident and he at once gave orders to break the camp and set off, although he was not accustomed to travel at that disagreeable hour. The Messenger wanted the people to get no time for the vain disputation and promptings of the devil. The Messenger continued to move all that day, and through the night till dawn and during the following day till the sun became annoying. He made a halt when the people had become so tired that they fell asleep as soon as their backs touched the ground.

'Abdullah was the worthy son of the unworthy 'Ahdullah b. Ubbay. He rushed to Madina ahead of the troops and awaited his father's arrival. When 'Abdullah b.

Ubbay came, his son knelt his camel obstructing the passage of his father whom he told that he would not allow him to enter Madina until he had acknowledged that he was the unworthy wretch while the Messenger was worthy and noble. In the meanwhile the Messenger also came up. He said to 'Abdullah. "Nay, let us deal kindly with him while he is with us." ¹⁹⁴

The Messenger used to cast lots, whenever he intended to go on an expedition, to decide which one of his wives should accompany him. In the expedition of Bani al-Mustaliq the lot had fallen on 'Aisha and she had accordingly accompanied the Prophet. At one of the halts on the way back to Madina, the Messenger spent a part of the night before he ordered to break the camp. 'Aisha had gone to relieve the needs of nature, and when she came back she discovered that she had dropped her necklace. She went back to make a search for it, but by the time she returned the army had moved off. The camel drivers who had the charge of Aisha's transport, saddled her litter thinking that she would be in it as usual. Now, 'Aisha was small and very light, so- none could notice if she was in the litter or not. When 'Aisha came back she found no trace of the army. She wrapped herself in her smock and lay down in the hope that as soon as they would discover the mistake some one would come to fetch her.

Safwān b. al-Mu'attal al-Salami had earlier fallen behind the army for a purpose. He happened to pass by 'Aisha. He saw her. "Inna Lillah", he called out, "The Messenger's wife !" Then he brought his camel near her

¹⁹⁴ Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. II, p. 46.

and turned back a few paces. After 'Aisha had rode the dromedary, Safwan took hold of the camel's halter and went ahead quickly in search of the army. Safwān overtook the army when it had again halted. Nobody took any notice of the incident, for such mishaps were not unusual in the caravans trekking the vast emptiness of the Arabian wilderness. To the wayfaring Arabs it was just a familiar happening and their code of honour, even in the days of pagan past, never tolerated the disgrace of their daughters. The Arabs, both as pagans as well as after embracing Islam, were chivalrous enough to lay down their lives defending the honour of their women rather than to countenance any disgrace.

A poet of pre-Islamic days expresses the Arab sentiment of chastity and virtuousness in a couplet which depicts a lovely picture of Arab womanhood.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ An illustration of the Arabs' conduct towards women is provided by the incident relating to the migration of Umm Salma. When she was not allowed to migrate to Madina with her husband, she used to go every morning and sit in the valley weeping till the night fall. So it continued until a year or so had passed when her claim took pity on her and allowed her to join her husband. She saddled her came and set forth for Madina. 'Uthman b. Talha met her in the way and on coming to know her plight decided to escort her to Madina. He took hold of her camel's halter and went with her to Madina. (Umm Salmā says that she never met an Arab nobler than 'Uthman. When she had to halt, 'Uthman used to kneel her camel and then withdrew. After she had alighted, he unloaded the camel and tied it to a tree. This, 'Uthman did all the way to Madina. (Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, pp. 215-17). This was the conduct of 'Uthman when he had not accepted Islam. Safwan b. al-Mu'attal al-Salami was a

If my glance meets the looks of a neighbouring maiden, I cast my eyes low until her abode takes her in.¹⁹⁶

The Companions held the Messenger in the same esteem and reverence as one has for one's father while the wives of the Messenger were all 'mothers of the faithful' to every Muslim. In fact, never have any people loved anyone more than the Prophet was loved by his Companions. Safwān b. al-Mu'attal was, as they say, a man of sterling qualities, noble, true souled and Allah fearing who had the reputation of being least interested in women.

In short, nobody paid any attention to the incident and the matter would have been forgotten had not 'Abdullah b. Ubbay walked into the picture. On coming back to Madina; 'Abdullah b. Ubbay went to work to capitalize on the incident. He had found out, as he would have thought, something which could be utilised by him to slander the Messenger and his household and thus weaken the sentiments of love and admiration the Muslims had for the Prophet. His treacherous disposition was not slow to realise that his shameless attack on the Messenger's honour would create enough misgivings to destroy the mutual trust among the Muslims as well. A few injudicious Muslims, who were used to ramble on without making sure about the matter they talked about, were also taken in by the crafty conspirator.

'Aisha had no idea of the vilification against her. As it normally happens in such cases, she came to know of it

righteous man of upright character who had already accepted Islam and had had the benefit of the Prophet's guidance.

¹⁹⁶ Diwan al-Hamasa.

very late, and when she did know, she was bewildered. Plunged into sorrow, her anguish brought her to tears and she kept on sobbing with overflowing eyes.

The scandal was even more distressing to the Messenger of Allah. When he had made sure who was at the bottom of this intrigue, he came to the mosque and ascending the pulpit he said, "O you believers, who would allow me to say something about the man, who, I have come to know, has caused trouble to my family. What I know of my family is naught but good and what they say concerning a man, I have known only good about him. Whenever he enters my house, he enters with me."

The people of Aus were filled with indignation at the unhappiness of the Prophet. They said, "We are prepared to behead the man, whether he belongs to Aus or Khazraj, who has given tongue to this calumny." 'Abdullah b. Ubbay belonged to Khazraj, and hence his tribesmen took the remark as an affront to their tribal honour. Feelings ran high, and the two tribes were about to grapple with one another, but the presence of the Messenger calmed them down and the matter ended there.

'Aisha was convinced of her innocence. She was distressed, but was also confident and composed like one who knows that truth ultimately prevails. She knew in her heart that Allah would ultimately protect her honour and bring shame to the lying slanderers but it had never crossed her mind that Allah would send down a revelation concerning her which would be read in the mosques and prayers to the end of time. She had not to wait for long when the verses attesting her innocence were sent down by Allah.

“Lo! they who spread the slander are a gang among you. Deem it not a bad thing for you: nay, it is good for you. Unto every man of them (will be paid) that which he has earned of the sin and for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be an awful doom.

“Why did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it, think good of their own folk, and say: It is a manifest untruth?”¹⁹⁷

And thus ended the frightful menace which was forgotten completely by the Muslims of Madina when they devoted themselves again to the great task on which depended not only their own success, but the salvation of entire humanity.’¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Q. 24: 11-12.

¹⁹⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 289-302 and Bukhari.

THE TRUCE OF HUDAYBIA

Vision of the Prophet

The Messenger had a vision that he had entered Makkah and circumambulated the sacred House of Allah. It was a true dream from on High, as it later came out, although the period, month or year of the pilgrimage had not been indicated in the vision.¹⁹⁹ The Companions of the Prophet were overjoyed when the Prophet told them about the vision. Everybody esteemed and revered Makkah and the holy sanctuary there. The opportunity of paying a visit to it had been denied to them for a long time but nobody had ceased to think of the holy city. They had been pining for going on a pilgrimage to Makkah all those years and were looking forward to the day when their hearts' desire would be fulfilled. The Muhājirin were especially consumed with the desire since Makkah had been their birthplace; they had grown up to manhood in that city but had been forced to abandon it. As soon as the Messenger informed the Companions of the vision, all of them started making preparations for the journey while their over-enthusiasm at the prospect of realizing the ambition of their life convinced them that they were going to call upon the House of Allah that very year. Almost all of them promptly accompany the Messenger for there was hardly one who wanted to be left behind.

¹⁹⁹ See the Commentary on Surah Fath, Verse 27 by Ibn Kathir.

Trip to Makkah

It was the month of Dhü al-Q'adah, in the sixth year of hijrah, when the Messenger set out for Makkah with the intention of performing 'Umrah, or the lesser pilgrimage. The Messenger had no intention of performing the haj, however. Making a detour through gullies of the hills he came near Makkah and encamped at al-Hudaybia. He had with him fourteen hundred Companions, in the garb of pilgrims, along with the sacrificial animals so that everybody would know that he was going not for war but for paying a visit to the K'aba.'²⁰⁰

The Messenger sent ahead a mail of Khuza'ā to find out the reaction of the Quraysh. When the Messenger reached Usfän,²⁰¹ the informer came back to report to him that the tribesmen of K'ab b. Luayy had assembled a strong force of nomad warriors to check his advance to Makkah. The Prophet, however, continued to drive ahead but when he reached the place where the valley of Makkah slopes down, his dromedary called Qaswa, knelt down and would not get up. The men around the Messenger started babbling, "Qaswa won't, get up, Qaswa Won't get up!" But the Messenger said, "Qaswa has not refused for such is not her nature. The One who restrained the elephants²⁰² is keeping her back. I swear by Him Who holds my life that if they propose anything to me which reckons with the regard due to Allah and ask me to show kindness, I will certainly accede to their request." The

²⁰⁰ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 380, Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 308.

²⁰¹ A village between Makkah and Madina.

²⁰² The reference is to the elephants Abraha had brought for attack on Makkah.

Messenger then rebuked the camel which at once sprang up on her legs, but changed her direction and started off towards Hudaybia. She came to a halt in an expanse at the end of which there was a ditch which had but little water. Certain persons complained to the Messenger that they were thirsty. He took out an arrow from his quiver and asked them to throw it in the ditch. Thereupon water started gushing forth and everyone was satisfied with drinking.²⁰³

Irritation of the Quraysh

The Quraysh were in a dither when they learnt that the Messenger had pitched his camp so near Makkah. But as the Prophet 'had no intention of fighting the Qurayshites, h. thought it fit to send one of his Companions to remove their apprehensions. He sent for 'Umar to depute him to Makkah, but 'Umar said, "O Messenger of Allah, there is none of Bani 'Adiy b. K'ab in Makkah who may protect me in case the Quraysh decide to lay hands on me." 'Umar also suggested that 'Uthman might be sent as his entire clan was there and he could very well deliver the message. 'Uthmān was then summoned by the Messenger and sent to the Quraysh to tell them that he had not come for war but merely for performing the 'Umrah. The Prophet also asked 'Uthman to invite the Quraysh to Islam, and to cheer the believing men and women still in Makkah with the glad tidings that

²⁰³ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 381.

Allah was about to make their religion victorious when they 'shall not be required to conceal their faith.'²⁰⁴

Love put to Trial

'Uthman went to Makkah and delivered the message of the Messenger to Abu Sufyān and other leaders of the Quraysh. After the Makkans had heard the message brought by 'Uthmān they said, "If you want to go round the holy sanctuary, you may do so." 'Uthmān, however, replied, "I won't do until the Messenger has gone round the K'aba."²⁰⁵ After his return from Makkah certain Muslims said to him, "Abu 'Abdullah, you have been fortunate enough to fulfill your heart's desire by going round the K'aba." "Don't be unfair to me," replied 'Uthmān. "I declare by Him Who holds my life that if I were detained there for a whole year and the Prophet were to remain in Hudaybia, I would not have gone round the K'aba until the Prophet had done so. Of a fact, the Quraysh did invite me to circumambulate the House of Allah, but I declined."²⁰⁶

The Pledge of Rizwan

The Messenger was informed that 'Uthmān had been killed. He summoned the people to take an oath to avenge 'Uthman's death. Everybody gathered round the Messenger impatiently. Standing under the shade of a tree, the Messenger took the oath one by one from the fourteen hundred standing round him; not one failed to take the

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 315.

²⁰⁶ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 382.

oath and at last the Messenger struck one of his hands on the other saying, "This is the pledge on behalf of 'Uthman."²⁰⁷ Thus was the pledge of Rizwan taken under an acacia which finds a mention in the Qur'an.

"Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto you beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and bath rewarded them with a near victory."²⁰⁸

Parleys, Conciliation and Accord

The deadlock still lingered on when Budayl b. Warqa' of the tribe of Khuzā'a suddenly appeared with a few of his clansmen to straighten out the impasse. He asked the Messenger, "What have you come for?"

"We have come to perform the 'Umrah", replied the Messenger, "The Quraysh are already wrecked by war. If they agree I will make peace with them for a specified period and they should give passage to me and my Companions; if they want they may league with the group others have joined and this would give them a respite: but if nothing is acceptable to them except war, then by Him Who holds my life, I would fight them until I lose my head or Allah makes His religion victorious."

Budayl b. Warqa' communicated to the Quraysh what he had heard from the Messenger of Allah. 'Urwa b. Mas'ūd-al-Thaqafi, who happened to be present on the

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Q. 48:18.

occasion, advised the Quraysh that they ought to accept the terms proposed by the Messenger for they were absolutely reasonable. He also suggested that he might himself see the Prophet to which the Quraysh agreed. 'Urwa went to the Prophet to discuss the matter with him but he also kept his eyes open to watch the behaviour of the Companions towards the Messenger. He saw that if the Messenger spat, his Companions ran to get it on their hands and rubbed it on their faces. If he asked for anything, they vied for complying with his orders; if he performed ablution, they struggled to get the water he had used and if he spoke, everybody listened with rapt attention. Nobody dared even to look straight into his eyes. When 'Urwa went back to the Quraysh, he said, "I have been to the courts of the kings and have seen the splendor of the Caesar and the Chosroes and the Negus, but never have I seen any king being so revered as Muhammad (peace be upon him), by his Companions."²⁰⁹ He gave the details of his talk with the Messenger and again advised the Quraysh to accept the terms offered to them.

The Treaty of Peace

In the meantime another man of Bani Kinānā, Mikraz b. Hafs, arrived in Makkah. He confirmed what the earlier emissaries had told the Quraysh and so they decided to send Suhayl b. 'Amr to negotiate the terms of treaty. As soon as the Messenger saw him coming, he said, "That they have sent this man, it seems they want peace."

²⁰⁹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 382.

The Messenger also asked to prepare a draft of the agreement.²¹⁰

Exemplary Moderation and Prudence

The Messenger summoned 'Ali and told him to write: "In the name of Allah, Rahman 'the Beneficent', Rahim 'the Merciful.'" Suhayl protested, "I do not recognise Rahman, but write as the custom goes." The Prophet then directed 'Ali, "Write.: In Thy name, O Allah." Certain Muslims demurred, "No, we must write: In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." But the Prophet said again, "Let it be: In Thy name, O Allah."

Then the Messenger asked 'Ali to write: "This is what Muhammad (peace be upon him) the Messenger of Allah has decided." Suhayl again objected, "I swear by Allah, if we had witnessed that you were Allah's messenger, we would not have turned you away from the House of Allah nor fought with you; you should write: Muhammad (SAW) b. 'Abdullah."

"I am Allah's Messenger even if you disbelieve me", replied the Prophet; but asked 'Ali to rub out what he had written earlier. "By Allah, I cannot do it", replied 'Ali.

The Messenger, however, asked 'Ali to point out the place to be rubbed out. 'Ali pointed it out to the Messenger and he expunged it by himself.²¹¹

Treaty or Trial

The Messenger started dictating the clause: "The agreement is made that the Quraysh shall not obstruct the

²¹⁰ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 316; Bukhari.

²¹¹ Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad-was-Siyar, Chap. Sulah Hudaybia.

passage of Muslims to the House of Allah and shall allow them to perambulate it." Suhayl again raised an objection; "I fear the Arabs would say that we have been pliant to you in making this agreement. You can perambulate K'aba next year." The Prophet agreed to include the clause in the agreement. Suhayl now was bold to say, "If one of us goes over to you, he shall be returned to us even if he professes your religion." The Muslims jumped up saying, "What! How can we return a man who seeks our shelter as a Muslim?"

The contention was still going on when Abu Jandal b. Suhayl appeared in chains. He had escaped from Makkah and had come to the Messenger struggling in fetters by a rugged, rocky track between the passes. Suhayl lost no time to assert, "Muhammad (peace be upon him), this is the first man I demand from you under the Treaty."

The Messenger replied, "But the Treaty is still being written and has not become final."

Suhayl was excited. He cried in a huff, "If it is so, then I am not prepared to make any agreement with you."

The Messenger said again, "Let him go for my sake."

But Suhayl refused. He said, "I will not allow him to go even for your sake."

Now, the Messenger replied, "Then do as you please." Suhayl was still foaming at the mouth. He retorted, "I have nothing to do."

Grieved to hear it, Abu Jandal said plaintively, "I have come as a Muslim to you, and I am being returned again to the polytheists. Do you not see what they are

doing to me?" Abu Jundal had been put to severe torture for the sake of his faith.' ²¹²

The Messenger returned Abu Jundal as demanded by his father.

The Treaty concluded between the Muslims and the Quraysh provided that both the parties would observe a ten-year truce so that men might live in peace and that no party would lift its hand against the other during the period. Another condition of the Treaty was that if anyone from the Quraysh came over to the Messenger without obtaining the permission of his guardian he would be returned to them, but if anyone of those with the Messenger escaped to the Quraysh, they would not be bound to return him. Yet another provision stipulated that anyone who wished to enter into a bond and security with the Messenger, he would be permitted to do so, and, likewise, anybody could come to a similar agreement with the Quraysh.²¹³

Faith put to Trial

The terms of agreement and the obligation to return, without performing 'Umrah, plunged the Muslims into the most profound depression. It seemed incredible to them how the Messenger of Allah had agreed to those seemingly ignominious terms. So dismayed were they that 'Umar went as far as to speak his mind. He stepped up to Abu Bakr and asked him, "Had the Messenger not told us that we would visit the house of Allah and go round it?" "Yes", replied Abu-Bakr, looking calmly at the angry face

²¹² Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 383; Bukhari, Bab as-Shurut fil Jihad.

²¹³ Ibn Hisham, Vol II. pp. 317-18 .

of his friend, "but did he tell you that you would go to the House of Allah and perambulate it this very year?"²¹⁴

Having concluded the treaty, the Messenger sacrificed the animals and got his head shaved. The Muslims sat with a long face for they were feeling beaten and crushed at not being able to visit Makkah and circumambulate the K'aba, but when they saw the Prophet performing the rites, they rushed to follow him in sacrificing the animals and shaving their heads.²¹⁵

Ignominious Peace or Signal Victory

The Messenger then broke camp to return to Madina. He was still in the way when Allah confirmed that the truce of al-Hudaybia was not a set-back but a signal victory instead.

"Lo! We have given you (O Muhammad) a signal victory,

"That Allah may forgive you of thy sin that which is past and that which is to come, and' may perfect His favour unto you, and may guide you on a right path,

"And that Allah may help you with strong help."²¹⁶

'Umar asked the Prophet, "Is it a victory, O Messenger of Allah ?" The Messenger replied, "Yes."²¹⁷

Failure or Success

Not long after the Messenger had arrived in Madina, Abu Basir 'Utba b. Usaid broke away from the Quraysh and escaped to him. He was followed by two

²¹⁴ Bukhari, Bab as-Shurut fil Jibad wal Masaleh.

²¹⁵ Zad al-Madad, Vol. I, p. 383.

²¹⁶ Q. 48:1-3.

²¹⁷ Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad, Treaty of Hudaybia.

emissaries of the Quraysh to bring him back. They reminded the Messenger of the undertaking given by him and he promptly handed over Abu Basir to them. However, on his way back to Makkah, Abu Basir got clear of his guards and fled to the sea coast. Later on, Abu Jandal and some seventy Muslims persecuted by the Makkans also made good their escape and joined Abu Basir at the sea shore where they established themselves on the road taken by the Quraysh for their commerce with Syria. The band of Abu Basir 'Utba now sought out the caravans of the Quraysh, robbed their property and spread fear and terror by killing any Qurayshite that came into its power. Once again the trade of Makkah was endangered. The things got so bad that the Quraysh wrote to the Messenger, begging him by the ties of their kinship to him, to recall these highwaymen to Madina and undertook to demand no more of those who escaped to him in future.²¹⁸

The Treaty turns to Victory

The events that followed proved that the truce of Hudaibia was a decisive step in gaining victory after victory for Islam. The trader-statesmen of Makkah had gloated over their success in extracting undue concessions from the Messenger. The Muslims, on their part, had been led to accept the seemingly inglorious terms of the treaty simply because of their strong faith in the Messenger. Both the parties very soon found Islam making rapid strides in the Arabian Peninsula. It opened the door to the occupation of Makkah and, before long, it became possible to send deputations for inviting the Caesar and the

²¹⁸ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 384.

Chosroes and the Negus to accept Islam. The revelation of Allah had come true.

“Though it is hateful unto you; but it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you, and it may happen that you love a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows, you know not.”²¹⁹

The attitude of peace and amicableness displayed by the Messenger on this occasion, which also demonstrated his exemplary patience and moderation, did not fail to impress the tribes which joined their faith to Islam. They were led to hold a high opinion of Islam and to love and revere it, which, by itself, created a wholesome atmosphere for its rapid expansion without any conscious effort on the part of the Prophet or the Muslims.

Khalid b. Walid and ‘Amr b. al-‘As

The treaty of Hdaybia also won the hearts. Khalid b. Walid was the promising general of the Qurayshite army who handled sword and lance with, the same dexterity as he did the troops. Soon after the truce had been signed at Hdaybia he accepted Islam and was conferred the title of the ‘Sword of Allah’ by the Messenger. Khalid proved himself worthy of the title as the conqueror of Syria.

‘Amr b. al-‘As was another dashing commander who subsequently made a name as the conqueror of Egypt. He, too, accepted Islam along with Khalid b. Walid and both of them called upon the Messenger at Madina shortly after the treaty of Hdaybia.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Q. 2:216.

²²⁰ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 277-78.

LETTERS TO MONARCHS

The peaceful conditions following the Treaty, naturally gave a fillip to the missionary activities which kept on advancing day-by-day. Islam grew like an avalanche and showed the signs of assuming vast proportions. The Messenger then sent several letters to the sovereigns outside Arabia and the tribal chiefs²²¹ within the country inviting them to accept Islam. The letters were not only couched judiciously by the Messenger but he also took care to select the envoys to different kings keeping in view the station and dignity of the different potentates. The envoys were conversant with the languages spoken as well as with political conditions of the countries to which they were deputed.²²²

²²¹ The letters were sent, as Waqidi says, in the month of Zil Hijja, 6. A.H., which coincides with 627 C.E.. One of these letters was sent to Chosroes Pervez, the Emperor of Iran, who was killed in March 628 A. D. The letter to Heraclius would have also been sent in 627 A. D. but he set out on a tour to Armenia during 628 A. D. Heraclius should have, thus, received the letter on his return from Armenia when he went forth to the pilgrimage of Palestine. (See Alfred J. Butler, *The Arab Conquers of Egypt*, p. 140).

²²² According to Ibn S'ad (*Tabaqat*, Vol. II, p. 2) and Siyuu (*Al-Khasa'is al-Kubra*, Vol. II, p. 11), the Messenger's ambassadors received the miraculous gift of languages and were able to speak in the language of the country to which they were sent. While a miracle similar to that conferred on the disciples of Jesus on the Day of Pentecost cannot be ruled out, for, the Prophet of Islam worked many an astounding miracle mentioned by his earliest biographers, but it appears more reasonable to expect that the Prophet had selected envoys who could speak those languages.

When the Messenger expressed the desire to send letters to the kings of the Arabs and non-Arabs, the Companions advised him to affix his seal on the letters for the unsealed letters were not recognised by the kings. The Messenger accordingly got struck a silver seal on which was engraved: "Muhammad (SAW) the Messenger of Allah."²²³

Letters of the Prophet

Of the many letters sent by the Messenger, those written to Heraclius, the Emperor of Byzantine Empire, Chosroes II, the Emperor of Iran, Negus, the king of Abyssinia and Muqauqis, the ruler of Egypt, are remarkably significant.

Dihya b. Khalifa al-Kalbi, who was assigned to take the letter to Heraclius, got it forwarded to the Emperor through the ruler of Busra. The Messenger wrote in this letter²²⁴:

"In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. This letter is from Muhammad, the slave and Messenger of

The envoys were sent only to four foreign countries—Byzantium, Egypt, Iran and Abyssinia which had very close trade relations with Arabia. The Arabs fitted out caravans to these lands and we also find the nationals of these countries visiting Arabia or even settled down there. It was, therefore, not at all difficult for the Prophet to select such men who could already speak the languages of these countries. The embassies to Arab chiefs should, however, have presented no difficulty since all of them spoke Arabic.

²²³ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Jihād and Shama'il Tirmidhi.

²²⁴ The original letter of the Prophet to Heraclius was in Spain for long centuries and it has reappeared now (Muhammad (SAW) Hamidullah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasulullah, p. 211).

Allah, to Heraclius, the great King of Rome. Blessed are those who follow the guidance.

“After this, verily I call you to Islam. Embrace Islam that you may find peace, and Allah will give you a double reward. If you reject, then on you shall rest the sin of your subjects and followers.²²⁵ O People of the Book, come to that which is common between us and you; that we will serve none but Allah, nor associate aught with Him, nor take others for Lords besides Allah. But if you turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims.²²⁶

The letter sent to the Chosroes II read:

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad; the Messenger of Allah, to Kisra, the great King of Persia.

“Peace be upon whom who follows the guidance, believes in Allah and His Messenger, bear witness that there is no Allah but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah for the entire humanity is that every man alive is warned of the awe of Allah. Embrace Islam that you may find peace; otherwise on you shall rest the sin of the Magis.²²⁷

In the letter²²⁸ addressed to Negus, the Prophet had written that :

²²⁵ The Arabic word used by the Prophet' was *araisiyan* or *arisen* variously translated by latter biographers, which has been discussed later on in this chapter.

²²⁶ Bukhari, Chap. How the Revelation to the Prophet Began.

²²⁷ Al-Tabari, Vol. III, p. 90.

²²⁸ The original letter exists at Damascus (Muhammad Hamidullah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasulullah, p. 216).

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, in Negus. the great King of Abyssinia.

“Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.

“After this, Glory be to Allah besides Whom there is no god, the Sovereign, the Holy, the Peace, the faithful, the Protector. I bear witness that Jesus, the son of Mary, is the Spirit of Allah, and His Word which He east unto Mary, the Virgin, the good, the pure, so that she conceived Jesus.

Allah created him from His Spirit and His breathing as He created Adam by His hand and His breathing. I call you to Allah, the Unique, without any associate, and to His obedience and to follow me and to believe in that which came to me, for I am the Mesenger of Allah. I invite you and your men to the Great Lord. I have accomplished my task and my admonitions, so receive my advice. Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.²²⁹

The letter²³⁰ sent to Muqauqis, the Chief of the Copts Egypt, said:

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. From Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, to Muqauqis, the Chief of the Copts.

“Peace be upon him who follows the guidance.

“After this, I call you to Islam that you may find peace, and Allah will give you a double reward. If you reject, then on you shall be the sin of your countrymen. O

²²⁹ Tabaqat Ibn S'ad, Vol. III, p. 15.

²³⁰ The original letter of the Prophet to Muquaqis is exhibited in the Topkapi Museum at Istanbul (Muhammad (SAW) Hamidullah, Muhammad (SAW) Rasulullah, p. 216.

People of the Book come to that which is common between us and you; that We will serve none but Allah, nor associate aught with Him, nor take others for lords besides Allah. But if you turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims"²³¹

Reaction of the Monarchs

Heraclius, Negus and Muqauqis received the letters from the Messenger with all due respect and each gave a courteous reply. Negus and Muqauqis showed the highest regard to the envoys and the latter sent even some presents to the Messenger. These included two slave-girls, one of them Was Maria, who gave birth to the Messenger's son Ibrahim.

Choroos II was indignant; he tore the letter into pieces, saying, "My slave dares to write me thus!" When his reply was conveyed to the Prophet he said, "Even so shall Allah shatter his kingdom to pieces."²³²

Chosroes II wrote to Bādhān, who was his governor in Yemen, to get the Messenger sent to him in Ctesiphon. Bādhān deputed Babwayh. to tell the Messenger what Chosroes II had written to him and that he had come to take him to the King. But when Bābwayh came to Madina, the Messenger told him, 'Allah has given servent power over his father and he has killed Chosroes II.' The prophecy of the Messenger came true exactly in the way foretold by him. Chosroes' son Qubaz had by then deposed his father and seized the throne under the title of

²³¹ Mawahib Ladunniyah, Vol. III, pp. 247-48.

²³² Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 90-91.

Sherveh. Chosroes II was murdered in March 628 C.E.. and with him ended the glory of four hundred years old house of Sasanids. Shervèh enjoyed only six months of the fruits of his crime, and in the space of four years the regal title was transferred to ten sovereigns in quick succession, until, the exhausted monarchy was assumed by Yazdagied III. He was the last Persian Emperor for he was soon to flee for his life before the advancing army of the Muslims. And thus was realised the Prophet's prophecy within eight years of his pronouncement. The Messenger had also said, "No more Chosroes after Chosroes dies." This portion of the prediction also came to pass with the fall of Yazdagird III.

In a few years the whole of Iran lay at the feet of the Muslims. The bulk of the population adopted Islam and there were born in Iran men with such lambent flame of intellect that proved true, word by word, what the Messenger had once remarked: "If knowledge were to be found in pleads, some of the sons of Persia would attain it."²³³

Enemy speaks the truth of the Prophet (PBUH)

Heraclius decided to satisfy himself about the contents of the Messenger's letter. He ordered to search for a man from Arabia who could tell him about the Prophet. Abu Sufyân happened to be there on a business trip and so he was produced before him. The questions asked by Heraclius on this occasion show that he had a deep insight

²³³ Musnad Imam Ahmad, Vol. II, p. 399.

into the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets of yore and he knew how and when Allah sends them and the way they are usually treated by their people. Abu Sufyān, too, acted like a true Arab for he considered it below his dignity to tell the Emperor anything but the truth.

The conversation between Heraclius and Abu Sufyān is significant enough to be quoted here *in extensor*.

Heraclius: Tell me about his lineage.

Abu Sufyān: He comes of the best lineage.

Heraclius: Did anybody before him make the claim he does ?

Abu Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Had there been any king in his family?

Abu Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Who have followed him? Are they the poor and the weak or the nobles?

Abu Sufyān: They are all poor and weak.

Heraclius: Are his followers increasing or deserting him?

Abu Sufyān: Their numbers are growing.

Heraclius: Do those who enter his religion despise and leave?

Abu Sufyān: No.

Heraclius: Did you find him telling lies before he made the claim?

Abu Sufyān: No.

Heraclius : Did he ever break the word given by him?

Abu Sufyān: Not as yet, but we have to see what he does in future.

Heraclius: Did you ever fight against him?

Abu Sufyān: Yes.

Heraclius: What was the result?

Abu Sufyān: The fortunes have varied, sometimes in our favour, sometimes in his.

Heraclius: What is it that he teaches?

Abu Sufyān: He asks to worship One Allah, and not to associate aught with Him; to offer prayers; to be virtuous; to speak the truth; and to be kind to the kinsmen.

Heraclius: then asked the interpreter to tell.

Abu Sufyān: "I asked you about his lineage and you replied that it was the noblest among you. Prophets always come from the best lineage. I asked you if any man in his family had made a similar claim and your reply was 'No.' If anybody had made a claim to Messengership in his family, I would have thought that he was imitating him. Then I asked if there had been a king in his family, and you said 'No.' Had it been so, I would have surmised that he was trying to recover his lost kingdom. And I enquired if you knew him to be untruthful before making the claim, and you said 'No.' I know that it is not possible for a man to be truthful to the people but to mince the truth in regard to Allah. Then I asked you if his followers were drawn from the people of rank and distinction or they were the poor and the weak, and you replied that they were humble and meek. Prophets are always followed by the humble and poor in the beginning. And I asked if his followers were increasing and you said that they were gaining in numbers. Faith is always like that for it goes on increasing until it is triumphant. Then I asked if anybody had turned away from him and rejected his faith and your reply was 'No.' The faith once settled in the heart never leaves it.

And then I asked if he ever broke his word and you said 'No.' Prophets never break their promises. Then I asked about his teachings and you told me that he asked you to worship One Allah, not to associate aught with Him; bade you to turn away from the idols and to speak the truth; and to be virtuous and to glorify the Lord. Now, if you have told me the truth about him he will conquer the ground that is beneath my feet. I knew that a prophet was about to be born but I had never thought that he would come from Arabia. If it had been possible I would have called upon him, and if I had been with him, I would have washed his feet." Heraclius summoned his chiefs and courtiers and got the doors of his chamber closed upon them. Then, turning to them he said, "Ye Chiefs of Rome! If you desire safety and guidance so that your kingdom shall be firmly established, then you follow the Arabian Prophet." Whereupon they all started off but found the doors closed. When Heraclius saw them getting sore, he was despairing of their conversion, so he ordered to bring them back. He said, "What I had said before was to test your constancy and faith and I am now satisfied of your firmness and devotion." The courtiers lowered their heads and were pleased to hear him speaking thus.

Heraclius lost the golden opportunity: he preferred his kingdom over the eternal truth. And, in consequence he lost even his kingdom after a few years during the time of Caliph Umar.

Letters to the Arab Potentates

The Prophet also sent letters to Mundhir b. Saw a ruler Bahrain;²³⁴ Jayfar b. al-Julanda, and 'Abd b. al-Julanda²³⁵ Azdi, rulers of 'Oman; Haudha b. 'Ali, the ruler of al-Yamāmā²³⁶ and Hārith b. Shammar al-Ghassāni. Mundhir b. Sāwā and the two sons of al-Julanda, Jayfar and 'Abd embraced Islam. Haudha b. Ali wrote back to say that he would accept Islam provided he was allowed to share the dominion with the Muslims. The Messenger turned down his request and he died soon thereafter.

²³⁴ Bahrain forms part of Najd and is now known as Al-Ahsa. The party sent under Abu 'Ubayda to raid the coast was dispatched to this region where it found a whale from the sea. The Traditions refer to this region as al-Bahrain. The name is now applied to another region, a Sheikhdome on the coast of Persian Gulf. The tribes inhabiting the region belonged to Bani 'Abd al-Qays, Bakr b. Wa'll and Bani Tamim. When the letter was written the ruler of the area was Mundhir b. Sawa, the Chief of Bani Tamim.

²³⁵ Al-Julanda was not the name of any person but a title meaning Chief or the religious leader in the dialect of 'Oman. Jayfar, being the eldest brother, was then the Chief of 'Oman.

²³⁶ Haudha b; 'All al-Hanafi was the King of Yamama, who professed Christianity. Salit b. 'Amr was commissioned to deliver the Prophet's letter to him. Yamama was then a vast region between Bahrain, to the east, and Hijaz, to the west. Banu Hanifa were settled in this region. Musaylima belonged to this tribe, who was nicknamed Kazzab or the liar after he made a claim to Messengership.

THE EXPEDITION TO KHAYBAR

The Divine Reward

Allah had promised a great reward to all those who had, at Hdaybia, sworn allegiance to the Messenger which was known as *Bey'at Rizwān* or the oath of paradise. For they had submitted to the will of Allah and His Messenger in that hour of crisis, Allah foretold them of the coming victory as well as the booty they were to win shortly.

“Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance unto you beneath the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down peace of reassurance on them, and has rewarded them with a near Victory.

And much booty that they will capture. Allah is ever mighty, Wise.²³⁷

The conquest of Khaybar was to serve as a prelude to the subsequent victories that followed in its train. Khaybar was a Jewish colony ²³⁸ comprising several citadels, some of which were built on the tops of hills and were virtually impregnable. It was, thus, the last but formidable Jewish stronghold in Arabia. Anxious to punish the Muslims for what had happened to their brothers in Madina, the Jews of Khaybar were ever willing to spend their wealth for stirring up the neighbouring

²³⁷ Q. 48:18-19.

²³⁸ The forts of Na'im, Qamus and Ash-Shiqq were some of the famous forts of Khaybar. Yaqūbi says that Khaybar then had 25,000 able-bodied warriors. (Vol. 2, p. 56, cited from Mujlb Ullah Nadwi, Sahibah was Tabi'yin, Azamgarh)

Arab tribes to wage war against the Prophet. At the time when the expedition to Khayber was undertaken, the Jews of the place were in league with the tribe of Ghatfin with whom they were hatching up a plot against the Muslims.²³⁹ The Prophet had thus reason to act against the Jews of Khaybar. He decided that the time had come to get rid of their intrigues once for all so that he might be able to divert his attention to other pressing affairs. Khaybar was situated at a distance of 112 Km, to the north-east of Madina.

The Messenger leads the Army

After his return from Hudaibia the Messenger stayed in Madina during Dhul-Hijja and a part of the month of-Muharram. Thereafter he marched off to Khaybar.

One of the Companions of the Prophet, 'Amir b. al-Akw'a by name, accompanied the Messenger on this expedition. He recited the verses given here while he rode with the army.

"We'd have not been guided, but for Allah,
Nor given alms, nor chanted Gloria,
We are the people, when attacked

²³⁹ With the Jews straining every nerve to bring about the destruction of Muslims, as Montgomery Watt says in his book, *Muhammad Prophet and Statesman* (p. 189), the action against Khaybar could not have been postponed any longer. Montgomery writes: 'The Jews of Khaybar, especially the leaders of the clan of an-Nadir exiled from Madina, were still incensed at Muhammad. They made lavish, though no doubt judicious, use of their wealth to induce the neighbouring tribes to take up arms against the Muslims. This was a straight forward reason for attack in Khaybar.'

Or treated unjustly, we resist.
Send down Sakinah upon us,
Against the enemy make us firm.²⁴⁰

The combatants who marched against Khaybar numbered 1,400 including 200 cavalry; all those who had lagged behind off the occasion of Hudaibia were refused permission to go on this expedition. Twenty women also went along with the force so as to look after the sick and the wounded as well as to prepare food for the men.

The Messenger halted at Raj'i, a *wadi* between Khaybar and the Ghatfân so as to cut the communications between the two allies. The Jews had other confederate tribes as well but the Prophet's halt at Raj'i forced all of them to remain at their homes instead of trying to reinforce the Jews. The road to Khaybar was thus left open to the Messenger.

The Messenger ordered to procure food for the army but nothing except parched corn was available.²⁴¹ When the Messenger approached Khaybar, he raised his hand to pray Allah for the conquest of the colony and sought the Lord's refuge from the evil of its people. The Messenger never took the offensive during night but delayed it till the crack of dawn and if the call for prayer was given, he first performed the prayer. Here, too, he passed the night and ordered to march ahead before the call for prayer was given. The Muslims met the workers of Khaybar coming out with spades and baskets. As soon as

²⁴⁰ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 344-45, Muslim, Chap. Gazwah Khaybar.

²⁴¹ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 345-46, Bukhari, Chapter, Ghazwah Khaybar.

they saw the Messenger and the army, they turned off their heels shouting, "Muhammad (SAW) and his force." The Messenger said, "Allah is Great. Khaybar is destroyed. When we fall upon a people, the morning is bad for those who have already been warned."²⁴²

The Victorious Commander

The Messenger came at the forts and started overpowering them one by one. Marhab, the well-known Jew warlord, held one of these citadels. It was a fortified stronghold at which the initial drives did not meet with success, while 'Ali was suffering from ophthalmia. After a few unsuccessful charges, the Messenger said, "Tomorrow I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger and he will conquer the fort." Every companion waited in suspense, hoping to get the standard. The Messenger summoned 'Ali, applied his spittle to 'Ali's eyes and prayed for his success. The eyes of 'Ali were cured in no time; he was then given the standards and told to fight the Jews until he prevailed over them. The Prophet said to 'Ali, "Go ahead and encompass them. First invite them to accept Islam and explain the obligations they owe to Allah. I Swear to Allah that if even one man is guided to the right path through you, this would be better for you than the red camels".

Ali faces the Jew Warrior

When 'Ali came near the fort, Marhab the Jew came out on his horse protected by armour and shield; reciting a

²⁴² Ibn Hisham, Vol. III, pp. 229-30.

poem about his valour. 'Ali dashed out on Marhab and both fell upon each other swinging their scimitars. 'Ali's sword was first to plunge into Marhab running through his helmet and head until his face was divided into two equal parts. 'Ali was at last successful in reducing the fort.²⁴³

Muhammad b. Maslaima fought bravely at Khaybar and killed a number of well-known Jewish warriors.

An Easy Reward

The slave of a Jew of Khaybar had been hired to watch over the flocks of his master. When he saw the Jews taking up arms for giving a fight to the Muslims, he asked, "What for do you go?" The Jews replied that they were going to fight the man who had laid a claim to prophethood. The slave's curiosity brought him to the Prophet, whom he asked about the faith preached by him. The Messenger replied, "I call you to Islam, that is, you bear witness that there is no deity save Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah, and you serve not aught except Allah."

"If I bear witness as you say," enquired the slave, "and have faith in Allah, what shall I get in return?"

²⁴³ The encounter between 'Ali and Marhab has been reported by different persons - some say they fought for the fort of Naim while others relate it in connection with the fort of Qamūs. Bukhari has given different portions of the story but has not mentioned the name of the fort. Ibn Hisham relates that Marhab was killed by Muhammad b. Maslama but a report in the Sahih Muslim mentions 'Ali, while some verses by 'Ali leave no doubt that he fought and killed Marhab. (Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad, report No. 1807).

The Messenger replied, "If you die with faith, you will' enter paradise."

The slave accepted Islam and then asked the Messenger, "What should I do with this flock? I hold it in trust."

The Messenger told him to abandon the goats in the field near the fort and Allah would cause them to reach their owner. The man did as he had been told and the goats did found their way back to their master. The Jew also came to know that his slave has gone over to the Muslims.

Before the encounter started between the Muslims and the Jews, the Prophet urged his men to fight for the sake of Allah. The slave also advanced with the Muslims and was killed in the battlefield. When his dead body was brought back by the Muslims the Messenger cast a glance at him and turning to his Companions said, "Allah blessed this man and brought him to Khaybar. I saw two houris standing by his side although he never prostrated to Allah."²⁴⁴

I did not come to you for it

A Bedouin came to the Messenger and after accepting Islam expressed his wish to accompany him in the expedition. The Messenger asked some of his Companions to take care of him and see to his needs. When the Muslims captured one of the forts and won a large booty, the man had taken out a herd of cattle for

²⁴⁴ 1. Edal.Ma Vol. 1, p. 393

grazing. The spoil was distributed among the combatants and the share of the Bedouin was also apportioned. When he was given his share, he took it to the Messenger and asked, "What is it?" The Messenger explained that it was his share of the booty of war, but he said, "I didn't come to you for it." Then pointing to his throat he continued, "I followed you in the hope that I would be hit by an arrow here and would go to paradise" The Messenger replied, "If you desire it so, Allah will do likewise."

Then, in a subsequent battle at Khaybar the dead body of the Bedouin was found among those killed in the encounter. The Messenger asked, "Is it the same man?" When the Companions replied in the affirmative, the Messenger remarked, "He was true to Allah and Allah made his wish come true." The Messenger shrouded his corpse with his own mantle and recited the funeral service for him. Thereafter, he said, "O Allah, Thy servant had some to migrate in Thy way and was killed for Thy sake. I bear witness to it."²⁴⁵

The people of Khaybar were besieged in their feet which began to fall one by one. The Jews, unable to stand the siege any longer, asked for the terms of peace. The Messenger wanted to banish the Jews from Khaybar but they requested him to be allowed to live in their homes and to cultivate the fields. They pleaded that they were better farmers and knew more about it than others. The Messenger did not want his Companions to till the soil since it would have required them to settle there and lay themselves out in farming. He, therefore, allowed the Jews

²⁴⁵ Zaad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 394.

to retain their farms and houses on the condition that the Muslims would get half of the produce of their fields and groves. Another condition imposed was that the agreement could be abrogated unilaterally by the Messenger.²⁴⁶

The Messenger used to send 'Abdullah b. Rawāha who used to divide the produce into two equal parts, and then ask the Jews to choose one of them. The Jews often remarked on his even-handed justice: "This is on which stand the heavens and the earth."²⁴⁷

Religious Tolerance

The booty carried off by the Muslim. in the battle of Khaybar included a few copies of the Jewish scripture. The Jews requested the Prophet for them and he ordered that they should be given back to them.²⁴⁸

A Jewish scholar, Dr. Israel Weiphenson reviewing the conquest of Khaybar, refers to the magnanimous treatment of the Jews by the Messenger in these words:

"The event shows what a high regard .the Prophet had for their scriptures His tolerant and considerate behaviour impressed the Jews who could never forget that the Prophet did nothing which trifled with their sacred scriptures. The Jews knew how the Romans had, when they captured Jerusalem in 70 B.C., burnt their scriptures and trampled them underfoot. The fanatic Christians persecuting the Jews of Spain had likewise consigned their

²⁴⁶ Zaad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, pp. 394-95. For details see Sinan Abu Dawud.

²⁴⁷ Baledhuri : Futu-ul-Buldan, Leiden, 1886, p. 34.

²⁴⁸ Tarikh-al-Khamis, Vol. II, p. 60.

scriptures to fire. This is the great difference we find between these conquerors and the Prophet of Islam."²⁴⁹

Arrival of J'afar b. Abi Talib

J'afar b. Abi Talib, the cousin of the Messenger and other emigrants, returned from Abyssinia while the Prophet was still in Khaybar. The Messenger was so pleased to see him that he kissed the forehead of J'afar and said, "By Allah, I don't know which gives me the greater pleasure, the conquest of Khaybar or the arrival of J'afar!"²⁵⁰

Another Jewish Conspiracy

It was during the Khaybar expedition that an attempt was made to poison the Messenger. Zaynab bint al-Hārith, the wife of Salām b. Mishkam, presented a roast kid to the Messenger, having first enquired what joint he preferred. On coming to know that the shoulder was relished by the Messenger she put a lot of poison in it and brought it to him. The Prophet tasted a morsel and quickly spat it out for he immediately came to know that it was poisoned.

The Messenger summoned the Jews and enquired from them, "Will you be truthful, if I ask something from you?" They said, "Yes". The Messenger again asked them, "Did you poison the kid?" When they again replied in the affirmative, the Messenger enquired what had made them to do that. They replied, "We thought that if you were a pretender, we would get rid of you, but if you were really

²⁴⁹ Tarikh al-Khamis, Vol. II, p. 60.

²⁵⁰ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 397.

a prophet, the poison would be ineffective.” Zaynab bint Al-Hārith was then produced before the Messenger. She confessed her guilt, saying, “I wanted to kill you.” The Prophet replied, “Allah would not allow you to gain power over me.” Some of the Companions asked for permission to punish the woman for her crime, but the Messenger forbade them. Z’aynab was set free but when Bishr b. al-Bara’ who had taken the roast lamb with the Messenger, died a painful death Zaynab was slain.²⁵¹

Effect of the conquest of Khaybar

The glorious victory won by the Muslims at Khaybar was of far-reaching importance, especially for the tribes which had still not accepted Islam. They were aware of the wealth and prowess of the Jews of Khaybar, their impregnable strongholds and valour of the well-known warriors like Marhab and Hārith Abi Zaynab. They deemed its capture to be virtually impossible but their estimate of the nascent power of Madina had proved all in the wrong. They now knew that the Muslims' arms were irresistible.

Discussing the effect of the victory gained at Khaybar on the subsequent history of Islam, Dr. Israel Weiphensohn says :

“There is not the least doubt that the conquest of Khaybar occupies an important place in the history of the subsequent conquests of Islam. All the Arab tribes were anxiously watching for the outcome of the sabre rattling between

²⁵¹ Bukhari.

the Ansār and the Jews. The enemies of the Prophet spread over many cities and the desert had pinned their hopes upon this battle.'

The Spoils of Khaybar

Having finished with the Khaybar, the Prophet directed his attention to Fadak²⁵² which was the principal town, fertile and populous, in the northern part of Hijaz, with strong fortifications.²⁵³ The Jews of Fadak sent an offer of peace to the Messenger, on the condition that they should be allowed to keep half of their produce. The terms were accepted by the Messenger who used to spend the income from Fadak on the welfare of the Muslims.²⁵⁴

The Messenger then moved on with the army to the Wādi'l Qura²⁵⁵, a colony founded by the Jews during the pre-Islamic period. Lying midway between Khaybar and Taima, it had become a flourishing town with the settlement of a number of Arab tribes in it. The Messenger invited the Arabs of Wādi'l-Qura to accept Islam. He told them that if they acceded Islam, their life and property would be safe and they would have a goodly return from the Lord.

²⁵² The population of Fadak consisted of the Jews belonging to Bani Murrah and Bani S'ad b. Bakr. (Nihayatul 'Arab Vol. XVII, p. 209).

²⁵³ Ibn, Hisham, Vol. II, p. 368.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Wadi'l-Qura was a valley with a large number of villages and towns, populated by Arab and Jewish tribes. It had a fertile land with numerous wells and springs.

The Jews decided to fight but the heroic assault led by Zubayr b. al-'Awwām made them to surrender the very next day. A great deal of property fell into the hands of the Muslims. The Prophet distributed the spoils among his troops but left the groves of date-palm to the Jews.

When the Jews of Taima²⁵⁶ learnt about the fall of Khaybar, Fadak and Wādī'l-Qura and the terms on which they had made peace with the Messenger, they hastened to send him an offer of peace. The Prophet accepted their proposal and allowed them to retain the possession of their land and property. Thereafter the Messenger returned to Madina.²⁵⁷

Large-heartedness of the Muhājirin

The Ansār of Madina had shared their possessions with the emigrants when they had come from Makkah. Now, well- provided with the spoils of Khaybar, the Muhājirin returned the property shared earlier by their Ansār brethren. Umm Sulaym, the mother of Arias b. Mālik, had presented a few date- palm trees to the Messenger, who had given now these to his freed slave-woman Umin Ayman. After the Messenger got the groves of Fadak, he returned the date-palm trees of Umm Sulaym to her and compensated Umm Ayman with ten trees of Fadak for every date-palm given-earlier to her.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁶ Taima is further away from Wadi-l-Qura in the north near the confines of Syria. The noted Jewish poet, Samawal b. 'Adiya lived here in a castle called al-Ablaq at-Fard.

²⁵⁷ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 405.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 406.

The Messenger sent forth a number of raiding parties under eminent Companions against some of the contumacious desert tribes. Some of these detachments had to put up a fight against them while others returned without any contest.²⁵⁹

The Missed Pilgrimage

The following year, in 7 A. H., the Messenger and his followers took the road to Makkah for performing the lesser pilgrimage missed by them earlier. The Quraysh thought it best to lock their houses and retire to the heights of Jabl Qa'iyq'an overlooking the valley.²⁶⁰ The Messenger stayed for three days in the holy city and made the circuit of the holy house. Referring to the joyous event, the Qur'an says:

"Allah has fulfilled the vision ²⁶¹ for his Messenger in very truth. Ye shall indeed enter the Inviolable Place of Worship, if Allah will, secure, (having your hair) shaven and cut, not fearing. He knoweth that which you know not, and has given you a near victory beforehand."²⁶²

Rights of Women restored

Islam had changed the hearts and elevated the minds of the Arabs. The custom which prevailed in the

²⁵⁹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, pp. 409-410.

²⁶⁰ Bukhari, Chap. Umratul Qada.

²⁶¹ The Prophet had a vision that he was entering the Sanctuary at Makkah in peace and safety.

²⁶² Q.48:27

pre-Islamic days of burying female infants alive, so as to save the honour of the family was not only given up but the daughters came to be so dearly loved that the people vied with one another to lavish their affection on them. All Muslims, men and women, were equal, none possessing a privilege over another; only he was superior who was better in morals and piety. When the Messenger left Makkah after performing the 'Umrah, the little daughter of Hamza, Umama by name, followed him calling "Uncle, Uncle." 'Al! took her and bade Fatima to look after her. Now, Zayd and J'afar also claimed the guardianship of the child. 'Ali laid the claim of her since she was the daughter of his uncle. J'afar said that she was the daughter of his uncle and her maternal aunt was his wife. Zayd, too, wanted to have the child for all the Muslims were brothers and he could very well look after the daughter of a deceased brother. The matter was brought to the notice of the Prophet, who decided that the maternal aunt being in the position of the mother; the girl should be given to J'afar. To set 'Ali at ease, the Prophet said, "You are mine and I am yours." He reassured J'afar by saying, "You resemble me in your looks and conduct." Zayd was also comforted with the words, "You are my brother and client."²⁶³

²⁶³ Bukhari, Chap. Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

THE EXPEDITION TO MU'TA²⁶⁴

The Messenger had sent Hārith b. 'Umayr al-Azdi to deliver his letter to Sharhbil-b.-'Amr al-Ghassāni, a satrap of the Byzantine Emperor at Busra. Hārith was first tied up under the orders of Sharbil and then beheaded.²⁶⁵ Howsoever a disagreeable message was conveyed by an embassy, it had never been the custom of kings to condemn the envoys to a death sentence. The crime was disgraceful both for the sender of the letter and the addressee as well as fraught with danger to the envoys, and could not be allowed to go unpunished. The guilt of blood had to be avenged with firmness so that no tyrant dared to repeat the crime in future.

First Expedition to the Byzantine Territory

The Messenger decided to send a detachment to Busra in Jamad-al-Ula, 8 A. H.

A force of 3,000 strong was drafted. It was the strongest force sent out so far and a number of leading Companions had enlisted for active service, but the Messenger gave its command to his freed slave, Zayd b. Haritha. He also instructed that if Zayd were killed then J'afar b. Abu Talib would take the command, and if he

²⁶⁴ Mūta lies 12 km. to the south of Kirk in Trans-Jordan. Thus Mū'ta is at a distance of about 1,100 km. from Madina. The troops sent for this expedition had to cover the entire distance on horses and camels in an enemy country without any hope of assistance or provision being made available by the local population.

²⁶⁵ Zad-al-Ma'ad, Vol. 1, p. 414.

were also slain then the command would pass on to 'Abdullah b. Rawaha. When the expedition got ready to depart, the people bade farewell and saluted the commanders selected by the Messenger.²⁶⁶ The force had to undertake a long and arduous journey and to face an enemy backed by the strongest empire of the world.

The force advanced to Ma'ān in Syria where Zayd came to know that Heraclius was present at Balqa' with a hundred thousand Roman troops joined by an equally strong force drawn from the Arab tribes of Lakhm and Judham and Bal-Qayn and Bahrā' and Bali. The Muslims bivouacked for two. days at Ma'ān, pondering over the situation.' They decided at last to inform the Messenger about the strength of the enemy; if reinforcements were sent by him well and good, otherwise they would face the enemy if so ordered.²⁶⁷

Dauntless Warriors

'Abdullah b. Rāwāh made an impassioned speech encouraging his comrades: He said: "Men, you dislike the thing, by Allah, for which you came out—martyrdom. We do not fight the enemy on the strength of our numbers, or our power; we fight them with the religion we have been honoured by Allah. So come on, we shall be gainers both ways; either we win or we court martyrdom." So the men got up and forged ahead to meet the enemy.

²⁶⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 373.

²⁶⁷ Zad al-Ma'ad Vol. I, p. 415.

Action starts

When the Muslims reached near Balqa', they found the Byzantine forces stationed in a village called Mashārif. With the news of the arrival of Muslim forces, the enemy advanced towards them, and the Muslim troops took up their position in a village called Mü'ta where the actual operation took place.'

Zayd b. Haritha, who held the Messenger's standard, descended on the enemy and died fighting bravely. He received innumerable wounds with 'spears. The standard was now taken in hand by J'afar, who led the fight. When the battle-hermmed in, he jumped off his charger and hamstrung its forelegs, and fought until he 'lost his right hand. He took the standard in his left hand but when it was also cut off, he caught hold of the standard with his teeth. He fell down dead in the battlefield after receiving ninety cuts from swords and spears on his chest and arms, but none on his back.' He was then 33 years of age. Thus fought this youngman with reckless courage in the teeth of greatest odds, defying the enemy's numbers and strength, until he was honoured by Allah with martyrdom.

The Messenger's standard was then held aloft by 'Abdullah b. Rawāha. He too dismounted from his horse and pressed onwards. One of 'Abdullah's cousins came up to him with a meat bone, saying, "Take it for you have not had anything for the last few days. It will give you strength to fight." 'Abdullah took it and ate a little. Then

he threw it away and, taking the sword in hand, fought bravely until he was also killed.²⁶⁸

Khalid Assumes Command

Now the Muslim troops rallied round Khalid b. Walid, who took the standard in his hand. With his instinct of generalship, Khalid made his way to the south while the enemy forces turned aside towards the north.²⁶⁹ The day was done by this time and both the forces, tired by day-long fight, thought it prudent to stop the fighting.

Khalid stationed a part of his force at a distance from his camp in the hush of night. At the first flush of morning the detachment set apart by Khalid started shouting cries of war which gave an impression to the enemy that fresh reinforcements had arrived from Madina. The enemy had had the experience of fighting the small force of 3,000 Muslims the previous day. Now they dared not fight them again strengthened by additional troops. The Roman soldiery was disheartened and did not take the field. Muslims were thus spared the trouble of putting up a fight again.²⁷⁰

A Glimpse of the Battlefield

While the Muslims were engaged in fighting the enemy at Mu'ta, the Messenger was giving a description of the conflict in Madina. Anas b. Mālik relates that the Messenger of Allah had announced the death of Zayd, J'afar and Abdullah b. Rawaha before the report about

²⁶⁸ Ibid., Ibn Hisham, Vol. II. p. 379.

²⁶⁹ Zad al Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 415; Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 379.

²⁷⁰ Al-Maghazi lil-Waqidi.

them reached Madina. Anas reports that the Messenger said: "Zayd took the standard and was smitten; then J'afar took it and was smitten, then Ibn Rawaha took it and was smitten"; the tears meanwhile trickling down from his eyes. The Messenger continued, according to Anas, "Finally one of Allah's swords (meaning Khalid b. Walid) took the standard till Allah granted them success."²⁷¹

J'afar Tayyar

Another report about J'afar says that the Messenger said about him, "Allah has given two wings to J'afar in place of his arms. He flies in the Paradise, wherever he likes."²⁷² Thereafter J'afar came to be known as J'afar Tayyār and *Dhil Jinahain*, meaning one who has two wings.

Words, kind and comfortable

The Messenger went to the house of J'afar and asked his wife to bring her children. When they were brought the Messenger took them to his face, tears rinsing down his eyes. Then he told them about the death of J'afar. When the news about J'afar reached the Messenger from the front, he sent word to his family, "Prepare food for the family of J'afar. They would be too shocked to cook their food." The Prophet's face at the time reflected his grief.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Bukhari, Chap. Gazwa Mu'ta.

²⁷² Bukhari, Chap. Ghazwa Mu'ta and Zad al-Ma'ad Vol. I, p. 415. Bukhari relates that Umar used to greet the son of J'afar thus "Peace be on you. O son of the twp-winged man."

²⁷³ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 380-81.

Not Deserters but Battlers

When the army returning from Mü'ta got near Madina, the Messenger and the Muslims went out to receive them. The boys also came running while the Prophet was on his camel. The Prophet said, "Take the boys and give me J'afar's son." J'afar's son 'Abdullah was brought to the Messenger who seated him in his front.

This was the first time that a Muslim army had returned without winning a decisive victory. Some of the people started throwing dust on the men, saying the while, "You runaways, you fled from the way of Allah." The Messenger said, "They are not runaways but battlers, if Allah wills."²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Musnad Ahmad b. Banbal.

CONQUEST OF MAKKAH

Background of the Conquest

Islam was now well-settled in the hearts of the Muslims who had, by the time, learnt all about it through experience. Allah had also put them to trial and felt out their minds and motives.

On the other hand, the Quraysh of Makkah had prosecuted, persecuted, exiled and battled with the Muslims; in short, they had been guilty of every sin of commission and omission against the Prophet and his followers. The Will of Heaven now decreed that the Messenger of Allah and his Companions should enter the holy city as its conquerors and cleanse it of the defilement of idol worship and deceit and lie and wickedness. Providence decided that the sanctity of the sacred city should again be restored to it so that it might again become the centre of Divine guidance and blessing for the entire humanity.

Dereliction of Bani Bakr and Quraysh

Allah created circumstances through the breach of faith by the Quraysh themselves who unwittingly provided a valid reason or rather made it unavoidable for the Muslims to lay their hands on Makkah – Allah's are the hosts of the heavens and the earth.²⁷⁵

The treaty of Hudaibiyah gave an option to everyone to enter into an alliance with the Messenger of Allah or to come to a similar agreement with the Quraysh.

²⁷⁵ Q. 48:7.

Accordingly, Banu Bakr preferred to conclude a pact with the Quraysh while Banu Khuzā'a entered into an alliance with the Messenger of Allah.²⁷⁶

Banu Bakr and Banu Khuzā'a had a long standing feud since the pre-Islamic days. Now, one of these tribes aligning itself with the Muslims and the other with the pagans, their mutual hostility was further intensified; in fact, both the tribes had made alliances with the two parties with no other consideration save to have their revenge upon the other. After the establishment of armistice, Banu Bakr tried to take advantage of it against Khuzā'a and, in league with certain persons, made a night attack on their enemy when it had taken up quarters at a spring. There was a fight between the two in which Baiai Khuza'a lost a number of their men. The Quraysh helped Banu Bakr with weapons while their chiefs, taking advantage of the night, fought against Khuza'a along with Banu Bakr. Their combined charge drove Khuzā'a into the sacred territory where some of the Qurayshites said to one another: "We are now in the sacred area.' Mind your Allah's! Mind your Allah's!" But others replied imprudently. "We have no Allah today. Take your revenge, O Sons of Bakr, for you may not get a chance again."²⁷⁷

Complaint to the Messenger

'Amr b. Sālim al-Khuzā'i went to the Messenger in Madina and recited verses describing how the Quraysh

²⁷⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 390.

²⁷⁷ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 419 and Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 390.

had violated their pledged word. He asked the Messenger to extend his help by virtue of the treaty of alliance between him and the Khuzā'a. He took the stand that the Quraysh had annulled the treaty with the Prophet by attacking his allies when they were at their well and had not spared their lives even when they were performing prayers. After listening to his complaint, the Prophet replied, "You will be helped, O 'Amr b. Sālim!"

Last Bid to Seek Justice

The Messenger then sent a man to Makkah in order to get a confirmation of the incident and also to allow the Quraysh to redress the wrong committed by them. The Messenger directed to place three alternatives before the Quraysh; they should either pay the blood-money for the victims of Khuza'a or terminate their alliance with the aggressors belonging to Bani Nifāsa of Banu Bakr, but failing these they shall get in return what they had done.' The terms were communicated to the Quraysh, but, in the fit of their pride, they replied, "Yes, we would prefer measure for measure." The 'Muslims were thus absolved of their undertaking with the Quraysh and it became incumbent on them to get satisfaction of the wrong done to their allies.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Zilqari relates in the *Sharh-al-Mawahib al-Ladunniyah* (Vol. II, p. 349), on the authority of Ibn 'Ayidh that the man lent by the Prophet was Damra and Qartah b. 'Amr had given the reply on behalf of the Qurayn.

Efforts for Renewal of the Treaty

When the 'Messenger was informed of the reply given by Quraysh, he said, "I see as if Abu Sufyān has come to you to strengthen the treaty and to ask for more time." The events took shape exactly as predicted by the Messenger. The Quraysh realised the enormity of the situation and felt sorry for the indiscrete reply given by the thoughtless among them. They charged Abu Sufyān to get the treaty ratified and extended again.²⁷⁹

Prophet preferred over Parents

When Abu Sufyān came to the Messenger in Madina, he went in to his daughter Umm Habiba, a wife of the Prophet. He wanted to sit on the Messenger's bed but she forbade him to do so. Abu Sufyān was puzzled. He said to Umm Habiba, "Daughter, I can't see if you think that the bed is too good for me or I am too good for the bed!" Umm Habiba replied, "The fact is that it is the Messenger's bed and you are an unclean polytheist.

I do not want you to sit on the Messenger's bed." "By Allah", said Abu Sufyān, "you have been spoiled since you left me."

Abu Sufyān Bewildered

Abu Sufyān went to the Messenger, but he gave no reply to him. Then he went to Abu Bakr and asked him to speak to the Messenger for him, but Abu Bakr refused to do so. He tried to prevail upon 'Umar, 'Ali and Fatima to intervene on his behalf but every one of them either

²⁷⁹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 420; Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 395-6.

excused himself or replied that the matter was too grave to be straightened out by him. Abu Sufyān so lost his nerves that when he went in to see Fatimah he said pointing, to Hasan b. Ali crawling in her front, "O daughter of Muhammad (peace be upon him), will you let this child act as a peacemaker between the people and that he may be acknowledged as the lord of Arabia for ever?" "My son is too young," replied Fatimah, to make peace between men. And, nobody can persuade the Messenger to reconcile against his will." 'Ali saw his perplexity and depression. At last, he said to Abu Sufyān, "I do not think that anything can help you now. You are the Chief of Bani Kinana, so get up and try to smooth over and restore harmony and then go back to your home." Abu Sufyān felt uncertain. He enquired, "Do you think it would do any good?" "By Allah, I do not," replied 'Ali, "but there is nothing else you can do now." Abu Sufyān then went to the Prophet's mosque and announced. "O Men, I have made peace between you." Thereafter he mounted his dromedary and rode off to Makkah.²⁸⁰

When Abu Sufyān told the Quraysh what had happened, they said, "You have brought us a report which is good for naught either to us or to you."

The Writ of Amnesty

A cousin of the Messenger whose name was Abu Sufyān b. al-Hārith²⁸¹ happened to meet the Prophet in the way. He tried to get in to the Messenger but was given a

²⁸⁰ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 396-7.

²⁸¹ Not to be confused with Abu Sufyān, the Qurayshite Chief, who was the son of Umayyah.

cold shoulder by him. Abu Sufyān had insulted as well as persecuted the Messenger in Makkah. Feeling distressed and disconsolate at the indifference of the Prophet he approached ‘Ali to pour forth his lamentation. ‘Ali advised him to go again to the Messenger and say what the brothers of Yūsuf²⁸² had said to him—‘By Allah, verily Allah has preferred you above us, and we were indeed sinful’²⁸³ for, said ‘Ali, the Messenger never likes anybody to exceed him in words, kind and comforting. Abu Sufyān did as directed by ‘Ali and got the reply from the Messenger, “Have no fear this day! May Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.”²⁸⁴

Abu Sufyān accepted Islam and was thereafter known for his piety and strength of faith but he was always ashamed of his past misdeeds. He always talked to the Prophet with downcast eyes and never dared look into his face.

Muslim army under the command of the Holy Prophet reaches Makkah and Abu Sufyan appears before him

Campfires were now lit under the orders of the Messenger. Abu Sufyān felt aghast as he saw them, and said, “I have never seen such fires and such an army before.” He came out himself to explore secretly the camp and its people. ‘Abbās b. ‘Abdul Muttalib had already left Makkah along with his family and joined the Messenger.

²⁸² Prophet Joseph.

²⁸³ Q:12:91

²⁸⁴ Q. 12:92

He recognised Abu Sufyān's voice and called him to say, "See, the Messenger is here with his army. What a dreadful morning the Quraysh are going to have!" Abbās then thought that if any Muslim come to know of Abu Sufyān, he would surely be killed. He therefore asked Abu Sufyān. to ride on the back of his mule and brought him to the Messenger. As soon as the Prophet saw Abu Sufyān, he said, "Has not the time yet come, O Abu Sufyān, for you to acknowledge that there is but One Allah?"

"My father and mother be your ransom," replied Abu Sufyān. How kind and gentle and noble you are; I think that if there had been another Allah besides Allah, he would have been of help to me this day." The Messenger said again, "Woe to you Abu Sufyān, Is it not the time that you acknowledge me as Allah's Messenger?"

He answered, "My father and mother be your ransom. How kind and clement you are but I have still some doubt as to that."

'Abbās now intervened to say, "Abu Sufyān, woe to you, submit and testify that there is no deity but Allah and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah before you lose your head." Abu Sufyān now recited the article of faith and thus he was converted to Islam.²⁸⁵

General Amnesty

The merciful Messenger of Allah now forgave the fault of all: it was the widest amnesty ever granted by any conqueror; only he could now lay himself open to danger who was bent upon running the hazard. The Prophet

²⁸⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p . 403:Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 422.

declared: "He who enters Abu Sufyān's house would be safe, he who shuts his door upon himself would be safe and he who enters the sacred mosque would be safe."²⁸⁶

Before ordering the troops to enter Makkah the Messenger instructed his men to lift their hands only against those who obstructed their advance or drew swords against them. He also directed them not to lay their hands on any moveable or immoveable property of the Makkans nor to destroy anything.²⁸⁷

Abu Sufyān witnesses the Army

Before Abu Sufyān returned, the Messenger decided to demonstrate the power of Islam to him. He asked 'Abbās to take Abu Sufyān to a place where he could review the marching squadrons.

The army on the move surged like an ocean. Different tribes passed by Abu Sufyān with their tribal colours, and, as each marched ahead he asked 'Abbās the name of the tribe. And, when he was told the name of the tribe he mumbled gloomily. "What have I to do with them?" Finally the Messenger passed with his detachment; the troops clad in full armour and appearing' greenish-black. It was the regiment of the Ansār and the Muhājirin whose eyes alone were visible because of their armour.

Abu Sufyān sighed and asked 'Abbās, "Good heavens, Abbās, who are these?" When 'Abbās told him that they were the Ansār and the Muhājirin accompanying the Messenger, he said, "None of them enjoyed this

²⁸⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 409.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

magnificence before. By Allah, O Abul Fadl, the empire of your nephew has assumed splendid proportions this morning!" 'Abbās replied, "Abu Sufyān, it is the miracle of prophethood." "Yes", said Abu Sufyān, "That's just it." ²⁸⁸

Abu Sufyān hurried back to Makkah, assembled the Quraysh and announced to them: "O People of the Quraysh, this is Muhammad (peace be upon him) who has come to you with a force that you cannot resist. Now, he who enters Abu Sufyan's house will be safe." "Allah blast you", cried some of the Quraysh, "how will your house suffice for us?" He added, "And who shuts his door upon himself, will be safe and he who enters the sacred mosque will be safe." Thereupon the people dispersed to take shelter in their houses and the mosque.

Triumphant Entry into Makkah

The Messenger entered Makkah with his head lowered in thanksgiving to Allah, his beard almost touching the saddle of his dromedary and the Suratul-Fath²⁸⁹ on his lips²⁹⁰, to denote the honour and victory granted to him.

On the day the Messenger victoriously entered Makkah, which was the religious and political centre or rather the heart of Arabia, he took care to exemplify the principle of justice and equality to man and humility and

²⁸⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, p. 404; Zad-al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 423.

²⁸⁹ 48th chapter of the Qur'an, entitled 'Victory'.

²⁹⁰ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 554, Bukhari relates on the authority of Mu'awiya b. Qarra that he saw the Prophet on the day of the conquest of Makkah when he was riding his camel and reciting aloud the Suratul-Fath.

submission to Allah, not forgetting even one cardinal virtue upheld by Islam. He seated Usāma b. Zayd, the son of his ex-slave, with him on his camel although all the nobles of the Quraysh and of his own family, Bani Hāshim, were present on the occasion.

The Messenger entered Makkah on Friday, the 21st of Ramadan.

The day Makkah fell to the Messenger of Allah, he happened to talk to a man who began to tremble because of his awe. The Messenger consoled him saying, "Be at ease and do not be afraid. I am not a king but merely the son of a Qurayshite woman who used to take meat dried in the sun."²⁹¹

The Day of Mercy and Forgiveness

S'ad b. 'Ubada passed by Abu Sufyān with a detachment of the Ansar. While marching ahead, he shouted:

"Today is a day of conflict,
Sanctuary is no more,
Allah has humbled the Quraysh."

In a short while, the Prophet's column came near Abu Sufyān. He complained to the Prophet and repeated what S'ad had said. The Messenger was displeased with S'ad's bragging and replied.

"Nay, today is the day of mercy and forgiveness,
Today will Allah honour the Quraysh,

²⁹¹ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Mughazi, Chap. The Farewell Pilgrimage.

And raise glory of the Sanctuary."²⁹²

The Messenger sent for S'ad and taking the standard from him gave it to his son Qays. It meant as if the standard had not been taken from him.²⁹³

Whatever the Prophet said or did, he was in fact guided from on High. The transfer of the standard was merely symbolic but not superfluous. The Messenger set at ease, on the one hand, Abu Sufyān whose, feelings had been hurt and, on the other, he avoided doing anything painful to Sa'd b. 'Ubada whose services for the cause of Islam were of no mean order.

K'aba Cleared of Idols

Finally, when normalcy returned to Makkah and the populace settled down, Allah's Messenger went to the sacred House of Allah. First he encompassed the sanctuary seven times. K'aba had at that time three hundred and sixty idols: he prodded each with a bow in his hand, saying:

"Truth has come and falsehood has vanished away. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish."²⁹⁴

And the idols collapsed, one after the other, falling on their faces.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Ibn Amwi has told this story in Maghazi. See Fath-ul-Bari, (Vol. VIII, p. 7. Bukhari has also related the incident, with a little variation, in the form of a dialogue between S'ad b. 'Ubada and the Messenger. The full name of Ibn Aniwi is Yahya b. Sa'id b. Aban who is regarded as a reliable narrator and known as 'the Truthful'. He died in 594 A. H.

²⁹³ Z'ad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 423.

²⁹⁴ Q. 17:81.

²⁹⁵ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 424; Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 424.

There were also some images and figures in the K'aba. These were destroyed under the 'orders of the Messenger.

Princely Generosity

Having gone round the sanctuary, the Messenger sent for 'Uthman b. Talha, who had the charge of the K'aba's keys. He took the keys from 'Uthmān and got the doors opened. Once, before his migration to Madina, the Messenger had requested 'Uthmān to give him the keys of the K'aba, but 'Uthmān had not only refused his request but had also been impertinent to him. With exemplary forbearance the Messenger had then said to him, "Uthman, the day will come when you will see this key in my hands. I would then give it to whom I would like." 'Uthmān had then retorted, "If the day comes, the Quraysh would be humiliated and crushed that day." "No", the Prophet had said calmly, "it would be the day when they would be honoured and secured." It is related that the prediction had so haunted the mind of 'Uthmān that he had come to believe that it would happen exactly as foretold by the Messenger.'

When the Messenger came out of the sanctuary he had the keys in his hand. 'Ali stood up and said, "Allah may have mercy and peace on you. Grant us the right of guarding the K'aba along with the watering of pilgrims." But the Messenger ignored his request and enquired, "Where is 'Uthmān b. Talha?" 'Uthman was summoned and then the Messenger said, "Uthmān, take the keys for these are yours. This is the day of good faith and

benevolence. This key shall ever remain with you and none but a tyrant would take it from you."

Islam, the Religion of unalloyed Monotheism

The Messenger stood at the door of the-K'aba, holding its frame, while the Quraysh arrayed themselves in front of him in the courtyard. The Messenger then addressed them, saying:

"There is no Allah but Allah alone; He has no associate. He has made good His promise and helped His servant. He has alone overthrown all the confederates. Lo! All the privileges and claims to retaliation and blood wit are beneath my feet except the custody of the K'aba and watering of the pilgrims.

"O you people of the Quraysh, Allah has abolished the haughtiness of paganism and the pride of lineage. Man springs from Adam and Adam sprang from dust."

Thereafter the Messenger recited the Qur'anic verses:

"O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware."

The Prophet of Mercy

The Messenger then asked the Quraysh, "O Quraysh, what do you think I am about to do with you?"

“We hope for the best,” they replied, “you are a noble brother, son of a noble brother.”

The Messenger said in reply, “I say to you what Yūsuf²⁹⁶ said to his brothers—“Have no fear this day;²⁹⁷ go your way for you are all free.”²⁹⁸

Then the Messenger ordered Bilāl to climb on the roof of the K’aba and give the call for prayer. This was the first time that the chiefs and nobles of the Quraysh heard the call to prayer resounding in the valley of Makkah.

Thereafter, the Messenger went to the house of Umme Hani bint Abi Talib, took a bath and offered eight rak’ats of prayer in thanksgiving for the victory Allah had granted to him.²⁹⁹

Equality Before Law

Fatimah, a woman of Bani Makhzum, was in the meanwhile apprehended on the charge of theft. Her clansmen approached Usāma b. Zayd in the hope that the Prophet being well-disposed towards him, he might be able to intercede with him for the woman. When Usama mentioned the matter to the Messenger, he found his expression completely altered. The Messenger said to Usāma, “Do you speak to me about the bounds put by Allah?” Usama felt so ashamed that he beseeched the Messenger, “O Messenger of Allah, pray Allah to forgive

²⁹⁶ Prophet Joseph

²⁹⁷ Q. 12:92.

²⁹⁸ Zad al-Ma’dd, Vol. I, p. 424.

²⁹⁹ Bukhari, Chap. The Day of Victory; Zaid al-Ma’ad, Vol. I, p. 425.

me.” In the evening, when the people had collected, the Messenger said after praising Allah.

“The people before you were destroyed because they used to overlook when a highborn or a man of substance among them committed a theft, but when the poor or the weak did the same they chastised him as ordained by the law. I swear by Him Who holds my life that if Fatimah bint Muhammad (SAW) had committed theft I would have amputated her hand.”

The Messenger ordered to cut off the right hand of the culprit. She is reported to have sincerely repented of her sin and led a normal life after marrying a man.³⁰⁰

Glimpses of his Kindness to Enemies

Now that the victory was complete, all the citizens of Makkah were granted amnesty. Only nine persons were condemned to death. Of these was one who had been guilty of apostasy after accepting Islam, another man had deceitfully killed a Muslim while a few others had been busy in crying down Islam and vilifying the Prophet: ‘Abdullah b. S‘ad b. Abi Sarah had abandoned Islam. ‘Ikrima b. Abi Jahl so detested Islam that he had fled to Yemen. His wife embraced Islam and requested the Prophet to grant him immunity. ‘Ikrima was the son of Abu Jahl, the greatest enemy of the Prophet, yet he was not only pardoned but when he came back to Makkah the Messenger accorded him a warm welcome. The Prophet rose to receive ‘Ikrima in such a haste that his robe fell off his shoulders.

³⁰⁰ Bukhari and Muslim.

The Prophet was well pleased to admit 'Ikrima in the fold of Islam. Accorded a place of honour among the Muslims, Ikrima distinguished himself by his deeds of valour in the battles fought with the Apostates and the Byzantines.

One of these culprits was Wahshi, the slave of Jubayr b. Mut'im, who had killed the Prophet's uncle Hamza. The Messenger had condemned him to death but when he came to witness the truth in Allah and His Messenger, the Prophet accepted his allegiance.

There was Habbar b. al-Aswad also who had attacked the Prophet's daughter Zaynab. She had fallen from her litter and had an abortion. Habbār had also fled from Makkah but when he came back to accept Islam, he was also forgiven by the merciful Prophet. Among those found guilty were two singing girls, Sarah and her friend, who used to sing satirical songs denigrating the Messenger. When an immunity was demanded for them, the Messenger pardoned their guilt and they acknowledged Islam.³⁰¹

Hind accepts Islam

A large crowd of the citizens of Makkah assembled for being received in Islam. The Messenger came to Mount Safa, where, one after another, the Makkans stepped up to take the oath of allegiance on the hands of the Prophet.

After the men had pledged their faith the women came up to take the oath. Among them came the fury of

³⁰¹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 425.

Uhud, Hind b. 'Utba, who was the wife of Abu Sufyān. She came veiled because of what she had done to Hamza.

The Messenger said to her, "Take your oath that you would not associate anything with Allah." "By Allah", she replied, "you lay on us something that you have not laid on men."

The Prophet said again, "And you shall not steal." Hind acknowledged, "I used to take a little of Abu Sufyān's money but I do not know if it was lawful or not."

Abu Sufyān was present on the occasion. He intervened to say, "So far as the past is concerned, there is no blame on you. It was lawful." The Messenger now recognised Hind and said, "Ah! You are Hind bint 'Utba!"

Hind said in reply, "Yes, I am, Forgive me what is past and Allah will forgive you."

The Messenger again said to her, "And, you shall not commit adultery."

"Does a woman of noble birth commit adultery?" She enquired in reply.³⁰²

Ignoring her question, the Messenger further said, "And you shall not kill your children."

Hind answered back, "We brought them up when they were young and you killed them when they were grown up. Now you and they should know better."

The Messenger asked her again, "And you shall not utter slander about anybody."

"By Allah", replied Hind, "slander is vile and shameful, it is better sometimes to ignore it."

³⁰² Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 603.

Finally, the Messenger said to her, "And you shall not disobey me."

"Yes", acknowledged Hind, but she added, "in matters virtuous."³⁰³

Inseparable Companions

Allah had opened the gates of Makkah to the Prophet. It was the city of his birth as well as his ancestral home. Some of the Ansār said to one another that since Allah had given power to the Messenger over his homeland and the city, he might now remain there instead of going back to Madina.

After a short while, the Messenger asked them what they were talking about. Now, nobody knew about their conversation. At first they would not tell, but ultimately they expressed regret and told him about the talk. Thereupon the Messenger said to them, "Allah forbid, I will live and die with you."³⁰⁴

Sinner Turned into Saint

Fadala b. 'Umayr wanted to kill the Messenger. He made up his mind to attack the Messenger when he would be busy in circumambulating the K'aba. When he drew near, the Messenger called out, "Fadāla" to invite his attention. He replied, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." The Messenger then asked him, "What are you thinking about?" "Nothing", replied Fadāla, "I was recollecting Allah." The Messenger smiled and said, "Seek forgiveness from Allah," and at the same time he put his hand on

³⁰³ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, pp. 602-3.

³⁰⁴ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 416.

Faāla's chest. His heart was at once set at ease and, as Fadala related later on, "The Messenger had not yet removed his hand from my chest that I found him dearer to my heart than every creature of Allah." Fadāla further says, "Then I went back to my house and passed the woman with whom I used to converse. She asked me to sit down and talk with her, but I replied, "No, Allah and Islam do not permit it now."³⁰⁵

All Traces of Paganism Erased

The Messenger sent a few parties to destroy the idols installed in the city of Makkah and around it in the valley. All of them, including those of al-Lat and al-Uzza and Manat-us-Thalāthatal Ukhrā were broken to pieces. The Messenger then sent a crier to announce that every man who had faith in Allah and the hereafter should destroy his household idols. The Messenger also deputed some of his Companions to different tribes in the vicinity of Makkah who destroyed the idols with them.

Jarir relates that a temple known as Dhul Khalasa existed during the time paganism prevailed in Arabia. Similarly, there were two more temples, one of these was al-K'abat-al-Yamāniyah and the other was al-K'abat-as-Shamiyah. The Messenger said to Jarir, "Why do you not give me rest with Dhul Khalasa?" Jarir promised and went with a hundred and fifty resolute horsemen of Ahmas³⁰⁶ and broke up the temple as well as killed those who were

³⁰⁵ Ibn Hisam, Vol. II, p. 417; Zaid al-Ma'ad, Vol. L, p. 426.

³⁰⁶ Ahmas (brave) is said to have been applied to Quraysh, Kinana, Jadila and Qays because of their horsemanship and bravery.

present in it. When Jarir returned and gave the report to the Prophet, he prayed for the Ahmas.³⁰⁷

Thereafter the Messenger assembled the Muslims and announced that Allah has made Makkah a sacred territory for ever. He said: "It is not lawful for anyone who believes in Allah and the hereafter to shed blood in the city or to cut down a tree. It was not permitted to anyone before me nor shall it be permitted to anyone after me." The Prophet then returned to Madina.³⁰⁸

The Youthful Administrator

The Messenger appointed 'Attāb b. Usayd to look after the arrangements of the pilgrimage and other affairs of Makkah before leaving the city. 'Attāb was then only twenty years of age. There were several other elder persons in Makkah, more experienced as well as prominent than 'Attāb, but his selection by the Messenger of Allah showed that he entrusted responsibility to a person solely on the basis of his merit and capability. 'Attāb continued to hold that office during the period of Abu Bakr's caliphate.'³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Bukhari, Ghazwah Dhul Khalasa.

³⁰⁸ Zan-al-M'aad, Vol. I, pp. 425-26.

³⁰⁹ Al Isabah and Usad al Ghaba.

BATTLE OF HUNAYN

The resounding victory of the Muslims over the Quraysh and ever increasing conversions to Islam frightened the enemies of Islam out, of their senses. They made another attempt, as a last resort, to check the fast growing power and popularity of Islam but their effort was no more than lashing the waves in a vain expectation.

Assemblage of the Hawazin

Hawāzin were the old enemies of the Quraysh; they regarded themselves as their rivals in power and prestige. The submission of the Quraysh to the rising power of Islam had made them undisputed champions of paganism; now they began to harbour hopes of winning the laurels by bringing the Muslims to their knees. They saw it a God-given opportunity to build up their fame on the declining prestige of the Quraysh.

The Hawāzin chief, Mālik b. 'Auf al-Nasari declared war against the Muslims which was seconded by several other tribes like Thaqif, Nasr, Jushain and S'ad b. Bakr. Two clans of Hawāzin, the K'ob and Kilāb, kept away from Mālik b. 'Auf, but the rest of the confederacy marshalled its forces to descend on the Prophet. They also took their cattle, women and children, staking everything on the issue of the battle, in order to ensure that every one would fight to the last and nobody would think of taking to his heels.

An old veteran Durayd b. al-Simina, who was supposed to be wise in the art of warfare, also accompanied the Hawazin army which made camp at

Autāst.³¹⁰ Their camp resounded with the groaning of camels and the braying of asses and the bleating of the sheep and goats and the crying of children. Mālik instructed his men: "Break your scabbards as soon as the Muslims are in sight and then attack them as flue men."³¹¹

The Messenger had with him two thousand Makkans, some of whom were recent converts while others had yet to accept Islam, along with the ten thousand troops he had brought from Madina. This was thus the strongest force mobilised so far to defend the honour of Islam. The Muslims were, naturally, overconfident because of their great strength while some even exultantly boasted that they could not be defeated now for want of numbers.³¹²

The Messenger borrowed on this occasion, some coats of mail and acmes from Safwān b. Umayyah although the latter was still a polytheist.'

Not a Sign of Idolism

The people of Makkah who had joined the Messenger in this battle were fresh from paganism. Now, in the days of pagan past, some tribes of Arabia used to venerate a great green tree known as Dhāt-u-Anwāt, under which they stayed for a day, suspended their weapon to its branches and offered sacrifices beneath it. When these men were going with the army they happened to pass by a big shady tree which reminded them of the past fetishism.

³¹⁰ A wadi near Ta'if, in the territory of Hawazin, where the battle of Hunayn was fought.

³¹¹ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 437-39.

³¹² Tafsir Tabari, Vol. X, pp. 63-64.

They immediately requested the Messenger: "Make us a tree as they used to have Dhāt-u-Anwāt, O Messenger of Allah." "The Prophet replied, "Allah is Great! By Him Who holds my life in His hands, you say what the people of Moses said to him: Make for us a god, even as they have gods. He (Moses) said: Lo! you are a folk who know not."³¹³ The Messenger then added, "Verily, you would follow every custom of the people before you."³¹⁴

In the Wadi of Hunayn

It was the 10th of Shawwāl, 8 A.H., when the Muslim army reached Hunayn, descending the wadi in morning twilight, the enemy had already taken its position in the glens and hollows and craters of the valley. A volley of arrows was all that the Muslims saw of the enemy, then suddenly the enemy followed up the attack with full force. Hawāzin were celebrated archers.³¹⁵

The sudden onslaught forced the Muslim flanks to fall back: "and they fled in terror, none heeding the other. The battle had taken a dangerous turn; a complete rout of the Muslims was in sight without any possibility of an orderly retreat or rallying of their forces again. Like the Uhud, when the rumour of the Messenger's death had disheartened the Muslims, the troops were once more driven to despair in Hunayn by a similar misgiving.

³¹³ Q.7:138.

³¹⁴ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 442.

³¹⁵ Ibid, pp. 442-43.

Rift Within the Lute

Some of the rude fellows from Makkah who had joined the Muslim army but were still not strong enough in faith started talking in a way that let out their antipathy to Islam. One said, "Their flight will not stop before they get at the sea." Another man remarked, "The spell of their sorcery has ended today."³¹⁶

Victory and Peace from Allah

The Muslims had to suffer this defeat after the brilliant victory of Makkah as if by way of punishment for their reliance on numbers instead of the support from Allah. Their faith needed to be strengthened by a misadventure for they had to learn the lesson that both victory and defeat come from Allah; neither the one should make man exultant nor the other despondent. The Muslims were all over with their trepidation when the peace from Allah appeared to be descending on them and the Messenger. The Prophet had all the while stood firm on his place, riding his white mule, without any fear or fidgets. Only a few of the Ansār and Muhājirin or his relatives were then with him. 'Abbās b. 'Abdul Muttalib was holding the bridle of his mule while Allah's Messenger was calling aloud: "Verily, I am the Prophet without falsehood; I am son of 'Abdul Muttalib."³¹⁷

In the meantime a detachment of the enemy advanced towards him. The Prophet took a handful of dust and threw it into their eyes.

³¹⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 442-44.

³¹⁷ According to Bukhārī Abu Sufyān b. Al-Harith was holding the bridle.

When the Messenger saw his men in confusion, he said, ‘O ‘Abbās call out, O Ansār, O comrades of the acacia tree.”³¹⁸ All those who heard the cry responded, “Here are we.” ‘Abbās had a loud voice. Whoever heard him calling got off from his camel and came to the Messenger. When sufficient number of men had gathered, they bore down upon the enemy. A combat between the two parties started afresh. The Messenger then took to a height along with some of his Companions. He saw the two sides grappled with one another. He said, “Now the battle has grown hot.”³¹⁹ He threw a few pebbles on the enemy. ‘Abbās elates that he saw the enemy becoming slack (hereafter and losing the day to the Muslims.³²⁰

Both the armies fought bravely. However, before all those Muslims who had fled away had come back, the enemy was discomfited and a party of handcuffed prisoners was brought before the Messenger.³²¹ Allah helped the Messenger with the hosts of heaven to win the day and brought Hawāzin to their knees.³²²

“Allah has given you victory on many fields and on the day of Hunayn, when you exulted in your multitude but it availed you naught, and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you; then you turned back in flight;

³¹⁸ Refers to the Companions who had taken the pledge of Rizwan at Hdaybia.

³¹⁹ *Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 445.*

³²⁰ *Sahih Muslim.*

³²¹ *Q. 9:25-26.*

³²² *Sahih Muslim, Kitab-ul-Jihad, Ghazwa Hunayn.*

“Then Allah sent His peace of reassurance down upon His messenger and upon the believers, and sent down hosts you could not see, and punished those who disbelieved. Such is the reward of disbelievers.”³²³

The Last Encounter

The bitterness and rancor borne by the pagans against Islam melted away after the battle of Hunayn. The last stronghold of paganism was toppled down in this battle and no formidable opponent of Islam remained in Arabia. The remaining tribes streamed to Madina from every part of Arabia to put their trust in Allah and His Messenger.

In Autas

A group of the enemy put to rout fled to Ta'if and shut the gates of the city. The chief of Hawāzin, Mālik b. 'Auf, was also with them. A detachment sent by the Messenger under Abu 'Amir al-Ash'ari overtook another party of the enemy encamped at Autās, engaged it in a fight and routed it completely.³²⁴ When the captives and spoils of Hunayn were brought to the Messenger he ordered them to be taken to Jí'rrana³²⁵ and kept in custody there.³²⁶

³²³ Q. 9: 25-26.

³²⁴ *Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 460.*

³²⁵ *An stopover on the road leading to north-east front Makkah.*

³²⁶ *Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 459.*

The captives of Hunayn numbered six thousand. The spoils included twenty-four thousand camels, forty thousand or more goats and four thousand *awqiya* of silver. This was the largest spoil which had fallen so far into the hands of the Muslims.

The Messenger had given orders to the troops, before the battle started, not to lift their hands against women, children, men hired for non-combatant purposes and the slaves. A woman was, however, killed in the battle. The Messenger expressed regret when the matter was brought to his notice.³²⁷

³²⁷ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 638.

THE BATTLE OF TA'IF

Fugitives of Thaqif

The warriors of Thaqif escaping from Hunayn returned to Tā'if. They closed the gates of the city after storing stocks of food to suffice for a year. Thus, they got ready to give battle to the Muslims.

The Prophet went at once to Tā'if. After pitching his camp outside the city, he set about besieging it in order to humble the enemy. The siege dragged on for some time, but the Muslims were unable to enter Tā'if whose approaches had already been blocked up by the defenders. Thaqif were good archers. The thick volley of arrows discharged by the enemy appeared like the swarms of locusts.

Siege of Ta'if

As the Muslims' camp was within the range of the arrows shot from the ramparts of Tā'if, the Messenger moved his camp to another side of the city. The siege continued for some, twenty- five to thirty nights during which the two sides fought tooth and nail to get the better of one another and exchanged valleys of arrows. The Prophet used, for the first time, catapults in the siege of Tā'if whose ingress and egress were completely stopped. The arrows shot by the enemy took its toll of the lives of several Muslims.³²⁸

³²⁸ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 478-83.

Kindness in the Battlefield

When the siege did not have the desired effect, the Messenger threatened to cut down the vineyards of Thaqif. The enemy was extremely perturbed for its economy depended on the fine quality of grapes grown in these vineyards. The Thaqif begged the Prophet in the name of Allah and their relationship to him to spare their cultivations. Taking pity on the enemy, the Messenger said, "Certainly, I leave it to Allah and kinship between us."

The Messenger got an announcement made that if any slave of the Thaqif came to him from the city, he would be set free. Among the ten or more slaves who deserted Tā'if, one was Abu Bakrah. Later on he distinguished himself by his deep knowledge of Traditions. The Prophet freed all of them and asked the Muslims to take care of their needs. However, the people of Tā'if felt very sore on the desertion of their slaves.³²⁹

The Siege Raised

Allah had not willed the fall of Tā'if. 'Umar was asked by the Messenger to announce the raising of the siege and return of the army. Feeling disappointed, some of the people raised outcry at the sudden order of retreat. They said, "Shall we go back without reducing Tā'if?" The Messenger replied, "Allright, mount an attack. They bore down on the enemy but were repulsed with losses. Then the Messenger said, "Allah willing, we shall return very soon.' The people now felt relieved and started making

³²⁹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p . 457 (on the authority of Ibn Ish'aq).

preparations for breaking the camp. The Prophet smiled when he saw them returning.³³⁰

The Spoils of Hunayn

On his way back from Tā'if, the Messenger stayed over at J'irrāna with his men. He intended to give an opportunity to the Hawāzin to make amends by calling upon him and accepting Islam. Thereafter, he distributed the spoils. The Messenger gave out first to those whose hearts were to be won. Abu Sufyān and his two sons Yazid and Mu'āwiya were doled out handsome gifts. Hakim b. al-Hizām, Nadr b. al-Hārith, 'Ala' b. al-Haritha and other Qurayshite leaders were treated generously and then every man in the army was awarded his share of the spoils.³³¹

Love for Ansar and their Selflessness

A large portion of the spoils was given out by the Prophet to the Quraysh who had to be conciliated to Islam while the Ansār got a petty share. Some of the young men among the Ansār aired their grievance at the meager gifts made over to them. The Messenger ordered the Ansār to assemble in an enclosure. Then he gave tongue to an extremely moving speech which tugged at the heartstrings of the Ansār and brought them on the edge of tears.

The Messenger said, "Did I not come to you when you were aberrant and Allah guided you through me; you were poor and Allah made you rich; you were divided and He softened your hearts to unite?"

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 448. Also see Bukhari and Muslim, Ghazwa Ta'if.

The Ansār replied, "Yes, indeed, Allah and His Messenger are most kind and generous."

The Messenger again asked them, "O Ansār, why don't you answer me?"

They said, "What answer can we give! O Messenger of Allah. Kindness and generosity belong to Allah and His Messenger."

The Messenger continued, "Had you wished, you could have said—and verily you would have spoken the truth and I would have acknowledged if you had replied—You came discredited and we believed you; you came deserted and we helped you; you were fugitive and we gave you shelter; you were poor and we comforted you."

The Messenger then turned to speak out something which spoke of the love he had for the Ansār and, at the same time, explained the reason for differentiation in giving out the gifts. He said, "Do you have some misgivings about me, O Ansar, because of what I have given to them for the short-lived bloom of this life by which they may become Muslims while I have entrusted you to Islam?" The Messenger then posed a question which inflamed the Ansar with the love of the Prophet. He asked,

"O Ansār, are you not satisfied that these men should take away sheep and goats while you go back with the Messenger of Allah? By Him Who has the life of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in His hand, what you take back with you would be better than the things with which they would return. Had there been no migration, I would have been one of the Ansār myself. If all the people go one way in a wadi and the Ansar take another, I would

take the way of the Ansār. Ansār are the undergarment and others are overgarments. O Allah, have mercy on the Ansar, their sons and their sons' sons."

All the Ansār wept until tears ran down their beards as they said, "We are satisfied and happy that the Messenger of Allah falls to our lot."

Captives Released

A deputation of the Hawāzin consisting of fourteen persons called upon the Messenger. They requested him to take pity on them and return their kinsmen and property. The Messenger replied, "You see the people accompanying me. What I like best is that you come out with the truth. Now tell me, which of the two is dearer to you? Your children and your women or your property?"

They replied with one voice, "We treasure nothing more than our children and women."

Now, the Messenger advised them, "Tomorrow morning when I have finished the prayer you get up and say: We ask the Messenger's intercession with the Muslims, and the Muslims' intercession with the Messenger that our children and women be returned to us." When they did as told by the Messenger he gave the reply, "Whatever was apportioned to me and the Bani 'Abdul Muttalib is yours. To others I make a recommendation for you." Thereupon the Muhājirin and the Ansār said, "Whatever share has been given to us is passed on to the Messenger."

Three persons belonging to Bani Tamim, Bani Fazārā and Bani Sulaym refused to part with their shares. The Prophet said to them, "These fellows have come after

accepting Islam. I awaited their arrival and gave them a choice but they preferred nothing over their women and children. Now, if anybody has serfs whom he wants to donate cheerfully, the way is open to him. But if anybody does not want to do so, he may refuse. He who holds a right t such captives shall be given six shares in lieu of each from the first booty Allah grants us."

Everyone replied, "We give back out' shares cheerfully for the Messenger's sake." The Prophet, however, said, "I do not know who among you is contented and who is not. You go back now and your chiefs will tell me correctly about your affairs." All of them returned the captives, women and children, and not one of them decided to retain his share. The Prophet also gifted out a garment to every released captive.³³²

Loving kindness

Among the captives rounded up during the battle, the Muslims took Shayma' and Halima S'adiya also into custody. The men taking her captive did not know her and although she told them that she was the foster-sister of the Messenger, they did not pay any heed to her and treated her roughly.

When Shaymā' was produced before the Messenger she said, "O Prophet of Allah, I am your foster-sister." The Messenger asked for proof and she replied, "The bite you gave me in my back when I carried you at my hip. The mark is still there." The Messenger accepted the proof and stretched out his robe for her to sit on and treated her

³³² Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 449, Bukhari.

courteously. He gave her the choice of living with him in affection and honour or going back to her people with presents. She chose to go back to her tribe. She accepted Islam and the Prophet gave her three bondsmen, a slave girl and some goats.³³³

The Lesser Pilgrimage

After distributing the spoils and captives at Jirraria, the Messenger put on the ____ for performing the lesser pilgrimage for this was the place, from where the people going for pilgrim age to Makkah from Tā'if changed into *ihram*. Having completed the lesser pilgrimage the Messenger returned to Madina.³³⁴

The Messenger came back to Madina in DhiQ'ada, 8 A.H.³³⁵

While the forces were returning from Tā'if, the Messenger of Allah asked the men to recite: "We are those who revert and repent and worship and glorify our Lord." Some of the people then asked the Prophet to call down evil on Tha'qif. The Messenger raised his hands to entreat, "O Allah! Guide Tha'qif on the right path and bring them here.'

'Urwa b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafi met the Messenger while he was on his way back to Madina. He embraced Islam and returned to his people for inviting them to Islam. He was very popular and enjoyed the esteem of his clansmen but when he broke the news that he had

³³³ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, p. 449.

³³⁴ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 500.

³³⁵ Bukhari (Dhi Q'ada is the 11th month of Islamic Calendar).

accepted Islam, the people turned against him. They shot arrows at him from all directions; one hit him and he died.

The Thaqif held out for a few months after killing 'Urwa but after taking counsel among them they reached the conclusion that it would be beyond their power to fight all those tribes which had already taken the oath of allegiance at the hands of the Messenger. Ultimately they decided to send a deputation to the Messenger.

No Complaisance to Idolatry

When the deputation of Thaqif came to Madina a tent was pitched for them in the Prophet's mosque. They requested the Messenger not to destroy their chief deity, the idol of al-Lat, for three years. The Messenger refused; then they continued to reduce the period by one year, but the Messenger remained firm in refusing their request until they finally asked for a period of one month after they had returned to their homes. The Messenger again rejected their request and ordered Abu Sufyān and Mughira b. Sh'uba al-Thaqafi to destroy al-Lāt. Thereafter the Thaqif asked the Prophet that they might be excused from offering prayers. To this the Messenger replied, "Nothing remains of a religion which has no prayer."

Abu Sufyān and Mughira b. Sh'uba accompanied the deputation of Thaqif when they returned to Tā'if. Mughira smote al-Lāt with a pickaxe and broke it into pieces. Thereupon the people of Tā'if accepted Islam; not one of them remained attached to paganism.³³⁶

³³⁶ Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. I, pp. 458-59.

The Expedition to Tabuk³³⁷

Some of the tribes still suffered from the: delusion that the rise of Islam was transient like a cloudburst, whose tide would be stemmed before long. It was but necessary to warn or even threaten such people before they utilized an opportunity to clench their fist at the Muslims. The expedition of Tabuk had the desired effect on such lukewarm tribes much in the same way as the conquest of Makkah had gone a long way in clearing away the clouds of opposition. This expedition against the Byzantine Empire whose might and magnificence was well known to the Arabs, virtually meant that the Muslims were ready to fling down the gauntlet even to the greatest power of the day. In what esteem did the Arabs regard the Byzantines, whom they called Romans, is well illustrated by the remark made by Aba Sufyān after he had seen Heraclius rendering honour to the Messenger's letter sent through Dihyā b. Khalifa al-Kalbi. He had heard Heraclius saying

³³⁷ Tabūk is half-way between Madina and Damascus lying to the south e.g. of Aylah, the biblical Elath or 'Aqabah. Yaqut writes, quoting Abu Zayd, in the *M'ojam al-Bulddn* that Tabuk is the fourth destination on the road from Hijr to Syria. It is reported that the Prophet Shu'eyb was sent to the people living there. Tabuk is at a distance of six days journey from the Red sea and lies between two mountains known as Hismy and Shibravi (Da'tralul Ma'drif lil-Bustani). It is now a military cantonment in the district of Madina at a distance of 700 Km., from it.

that he, too, expected a prophet to be born. Abu Sufyān had then got up, as he related later on, rubbing his hands and shying that the affair of Ibn Abi Kabsha' (i. e. the Prophet) had become so great that the King of the Romans dreaded him. Abu Sufyān further says that he was then convinced that the Messenger would ultimately emerge victorious and this was how Islam took root in his heart.³³⁸

The Arabs could not then dream of attacking the Byzantine Empire; they themselves feared Byzantine invasion or rather did not rate themselves so high as to be coveted by any great power. Whenever the Muslims of Madina were attended with a grave danger or their safety was imperiled, the most they could think of was to seek the aid of Gassānid King who was a ply larch of East Syria under the Caesar. What 'Umar said during the affair of Aylah, which took place in the beginning of 8 AH, throws sufficient light on the state of affairs in those days. He says that he had an Ansāri friend with whom he had arranged that one of them should alternately remain in attendance upon the Prophet and inform the other about the incidents happening in his absence. 'Umar further says that in those days they were alarmed by a rumour that the Gassānid King intended to invade Madina and were thus constantly agitated by it. Once, when his Ansāri friend came to his house and knocked at his door asking to open it, 'Umar enquired of his friend if the Gassānids had attacked Madina.³³⁹

³³⁸ Bukhari.

³³⁹ Bukhari and Muslim.

The Byzantine star was in the ascendant in those days. Its armies had, under Heraclius, dealt a death blow to the Iranian forces and carried their arms to the Iranian capital. The glorious victory was celebrated by the Emperor's stately march from Hims³⁴⁰ to Ayleh³⁴¹ in the seventh year of the hijrah. Heraclius himself carried, in the guise of a penitent pilgrim, the True Cross retrieved from the Persians while carpets were spread and rose water sprinkled beneath his feet all over the path by the people who went forth to meet their hero with tears and acclamations.³⁴² Hardly two years had passed after this splendid victory won by the Emperor of the Romans, when the Messenger led an army to face him. The Messenger's daring venture made such a deep impression on the minds of the Arabs that it would be no exaggeration to claim that the expedition of Tabük served as a prelude to the conquest of Syria during the reign of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. The expedition of Tabük really applied the match to the train of victories which eventually made the Muslims masters of Syria.

What was the genesis of this expedition? It is related that the Messenger got reports of Byzantine forces converging on the northern frontiers of Arabia with the intention of mounting an attack on the Muslims. Ibn S'ad and Waqidi are on record that the Messenger was informed by the Nabàtaeans that Heraclius was after stocking one year's provisions for his army and drafting

³⁴⁰ Emessa or Edessa.

³⁴¹ Elatb or 'Aqabah.

³⁴² Muslim, Kitab ul-Jihad.

the pro-Byzantine tribes of the Lakhm, Judham, 'Amla and Ghassān under his banner, intending to come upon him and that his advance columns had already reached Balqa'.³⁴³

Even if we ignore this report, it can hardly be gainsaid that the purpose of the expedition was to strike terror into the neighbouring power which was a potential source of danger to the rising power of Islam. The Messenger intended to forewarn the Byzantines that they should not consider the Muslims weak nor should they take any precipitate action to violate their territorial sovereignty. The expedition was thus a warning sign since one without enough strength could dare not shake one's fist at a great power nor could one take the risk of descending on its borders. It is certain, -at all events, that the true purpose of the expedition was what the revelation in this connection has explained in these words:

'O you who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who keep their duty (unto Him).'³⁴⁴

This objective was more than achieved as was subsequently borne out by the far-reaching consequences of the expedition. No retaliatory action was taken nor any detachments were moved to their borders by the Byzantines to drive-back the Muslim army. The Emperor, exhausted by his Persian campaigns, remained an impotent spectator to the raid on his confederate border

³⁴³ Al-Zurqani, Commentary on Al-Mawahib, Vol. III, pp. 63-64.

³⁴⁴ Q. 9:123.

tribes or perhaps he thought it fit to wait and see before taking up the cudgels against the new power rising in the East.

The pro-Byzantine Christian tribes in northern Arabia were impressed by the first rattle of the new Arabian power. This was a great advantage accruing from the expedition of Tabük for it made these tribes shift their allegiance from Constantinople to Madina which eventually led them to the acceptance of the religious aspect of the Islamic power. The expedition also went a long way to drive home the reality that the rise of Islam was not meteoric, fated to burst like a bubble, as some of the Arabs had been thinking hitherto, but that it was solid as a rock with a great future lying ahead of it. In fact, severance of the ties between these border tribes and the Byzantium was a condition precedent before they could pay attention to Islam, the new source of power and strength to them which was taking roots and raising its head in their own homeland. The divine revelation, too, makes an allusion to this aspect of the expedition in a verse Surah at-Taubah.

“Nor step they any step that angereth the disbelievers, nor gain they from the enemy a gain, but a good deed is recorded for them therefore.”³⁴⁵

The battle of Mu'ta was still fresh in the minds of the Byzantines who had failed to humble the Muslim army in spite of their vastly superior numbers. The Muslims, on the other hand, having once measured swords with the

³⁴⁵ Q. 9:120.

Byzantines, had overcome their traditional terror of the impregnable Roman legions.

In short, the expedition of Tabük was a landmark in the life of the Prophet as well as in the onward march of the Islamic mission for it had a far-reaching effect on the future course of events leading to the glorious conquests of Islam gestating in the womb of time.

The Time of Expedition

The Tabük campaign was undertaken in the month of Rajab, 9 A. H. It was the time when the date crop had ripened and shade of the trees was pleasant. The Messenger undertook a long journey for the Tabük expedition and traversed deserts and arid plains to face an enemy vastly superior in numbers. As the Muslims were then passing through a period of drought, the Messenger told the Companions before hand, unlike previous occasions, that he intended to make for the Byzantines so that they might make suitable preparations.³⁴⁶

The hypocrites fell out on different pretexts. They either disliked strenuous war against the powerful enemy or disliked to go out in the oppressive heat. They even doubted the truth and had little interest in lighting (in the sake of Allah, so they remained front accompanying the Messenger on this occasion. Such disaffected persons were admonished by Allah in this wise :

“Those who were left behind rejoiced at sitting still behind the messenger of Allah, and were averse to striving with their wealth

³⁴⁶ Sahihain, on the authority of K'ab b. Malik.

and their lives in Allah's way, And they said :
Go not forth in the heat! Say : The heat of hell
is more intense of heat, if they but
understood.³⁴⁷

Enthusiasm of the Muslims

The Messenger took particular care to make preparations for time expedition. He urged upon the affluent Companions to donate handsomely for the campaign with the result that many a well-to-do companion made lavish contributions for it. 'Uthmān spent one thousand dinārs on the force known as the brigade of distress or Jaish al-'Usr and the Messenger invoked Allah's blessings for him. A number of Companions who were unable to raise money for their mounts, requested the Messenger to arrange the same for them. As, however, their requests could not be met for want of funds, the Messenger expressed his inability to comply with their request and they had to go back disconsolate and disheartened. Some of them were so sorrow-stricken and depressed that Allah sent down the revelation exempting them from time duty of joining the expedition:

"Nor unto those (is any blame) whom, when they came to you (asking) that thou shouldst mount them, thou didst tell: I cannot find whereon to mount you. They turned back with eyes flowing with tears, for sorrow that they could not find the means to spend."³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Q.9:81.

³⁴⁸ Q. 9:92.

There were still others who could not make up their mind to participate in the campaign although their indecision was not because of any doubt or misgiving.

Army's Departure for Tabuk

The Messenger set out for Tabūk with an army 30,000 strong from Madina. In no other drive, earlier to Tab-uk, such a large number of persons had shouldered arms; Before the departure, the Messenger ordered the men to pitch their camp at Thaniyatul-Wadā'. He put Muhammad b. Maslama al-Ansāri in charge of Madina and left behind 'All to look after his family. When Ali complained to the Messenger that the hypocrites were going about spreading false rumours about him, he replied, "Are you not content, 'Ali, that you are to me as Haroon³⁴⁹ was to Mūta'³⁵⁰, except that-there wilt be no prophet after me?"³⁵¹

When the Messenger made camp in al-Hijr, the land of Thamūd, he told the Companions that it was the country of those who were being tortured for their sins. He said, "If you enter the houses of those who did wrong to themselves, enter tearfully with the fear that you may also meet the same fate that befell them."³⁵² He also instructed his men, "Do not drink any of its water nor use it for ablutions. If you have used any for dough, then feed it to camels and eat none of it."

³⁴⁹ Aaron.

³⁵⁰ Moses.

³⁵¹ Bukhari, Gazwah Tabuk.

³⁵² Zad al-Ma'ad, Vol. II, pp. 3-4; Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 522.

The journey was extremely arduous; scarcity of water added to the misery of the army. When the people complained to the Messenger about their distress, he prayed to Allah and a cloud came down in torrents until every man had quenched his thirst and stored enough water to meet his needs.'

Demoralised Hypocrites

Some of the hypocrites kept company with the Messenger. While the Muslim army was getting along to Tabük, one of them said to another, but alluding to the Messenger, "Do you think that the executioners of the Romans will deal with you in the same way as the Arabs do? By Allah, we seem to see you bound with ropes tomorrow."³⁵³

Treaty of Peace with Aylah's Ruler

Yuhañna b. Ru'ba, the governor of Aylah called upon the Messenger at Tabik. Yuhañna made a treaty of peace and also paid the poll-tax. So did the people of Jarba' and Adhruh, and they were all granted peace as well as a guarantee to the safety of their territory and their ships and caravans by land and sea. The treaties were got written by the Messenger and delivered to the parties. The Messenger received Yuhañna cordially showing him due respect.³⁵⁴

³⁵³ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 522.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., page 522.

Back to Madina

Byzantium did not stir. When the Messenger saw that there was no movement of troops by the enemy who seemed to have abandoned the border towns, he gave orders for the return march. The objective of the expedition having been achieved, the Prophet did not consider it necessary to advance further in the enemy territory to carry on hostilities. Only a Christian chief, Ukaydir b. 'Abdul Malik, who was the ruler of Dümatul Jandal³⁵⁵ and enjoyed the patronage of the Byzantines, was reported to be harbouring hostile designs. The Messenger sent Khalid with five hundred troops who captured Ukaydir and brought him to the Messenger. The Prophet, however, spared his life on the condition that he surrendered unconditionally and agreed to pay the poll-tax.³⁵⁶

After staying for a few nights in Tabuk, the Messenger returned to Madina.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ Dümatul Jandal was a populous town near Tabuk where the Arabs used to go for transacting business in olden times. Düma had been forsaken and was deserted when Ukaydir again developed the town and started olive plantations. The town thus regained its past importance. The place enclosed by a surrounding wall had a strong fort which made it an important outpost at the northern border. The town was populated chiefly by the tribe of Kalab and Ukaybir was known as the king of the town. He professed Christianity.

³⁵⁶ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 526.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 527.

CONCLUSION

Through the brief description of the painful events the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had to face throughout his life, it becomes abundantly evident that he lived a life full of tragic events. Each one of those sad events is so heavy which might have shatter to pieces even the persons of greater courage and firm resolve. The number of the heavier sad events in his life exceeds eighty. In other words, not even a single year of the Holy Prophet's life is free from a shaking tragic event. It would be too hard to find another person of such a high courage and resolve. But he bravely endured them all with unflinching courage and prophetic fortitude. Here is a citation from Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi which seeks to highlight this unique characteristic of the Prophet (PBUH) in his own specific literary style.

"Admittedly, all the Prophets of Allah and all those who rose with an intention to reform the decaying human society and bring spiritual upliftment to the human beings by delivering them from the darkness of disbelief to the light of faith and belief in Allah ta'ala, the Creator of the entire universe, there is absolutely none who escaped unscathed without facing a wider variety of savage cruelties on the part of their addressees. They were invariably accorded the most cruel and inhuman treatment, and had to bear with all kinds of unkind taunts and extremely insulting remarks from those to whom those Prophets were sent. But besides the sufferings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) other Prophets' sufferings

pale into insignificance without doubt. He received abuses and heart- rending taunts from every type of people belonging to the lowest grades of his contemporary human society from across different tribes of the then People hardly have patience to endure the hardships they encounter. But the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) patiently bore all his sufferings and hardships without uttering even a single word of complaint. He faced a tough social and human boycott from his own people and underwent a highly inhuman state of starvation and privations. His Companions and sincere friends had to endure all sorts of sufferings and hardships at the hands of their ideological adversaries. In the entire history of mankind no Prophet was ever subjected to such an inhuman, disgraceful, tormenting and demeaning treatment as was subjected the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Beyond count and measure peace and mercy be upon Muhammad, who offered the best example for all classes of human beings and who satisfied all sorts of human beings by his living example he left in all walks of human life, whose being provided an abiding satisfaction and healing touch to the poor, the aged, the sick, the dejected, the grief- stricken.

Be peace upon whom who was the most kind even to his adversaries,

Who prayed and remained sincere even after receiving much abuses.

CHAPTER FIVE

WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION

MUHAMMAD (PEACE AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON HIM) AS THE PROPHET OF REVOLUTION

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظَاهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ
بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا



It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion. And sufficient is Allah as Witness.

Muhammad (SAW) as the Prophet of Revolution

The following verse establishes this fact beyond any shade of doubt that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the only Prophet who could bring the most perfect and all- embracing revolution to the world and changed the human destiny for ever.

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth (Islâm), that He may make it (Islâm) superior over all religions. And All-Sufficient is Allâh as a Witness. (al- Fath:28)

The life of the Prophet (PBUH) is so perfect and versatile in all respects of human character. This fact of his life renders it extremely difficult to distinguish between different aspects of his life in terms of perfection. In his person he combined the perfections of all other Prophets and Messengers. A careful and deeper study of the perfections of all other Prophets and Messengers leads us to recognize the fact that all such perfections and higher morals might be classified under four broad categories. That is, knowledge, practical assimilation of that knowledge, splendid and majestic appearance; and beauty. According to my study the perfections of all the Prophets and distinguishing features of their characters might be summed up well in these four traits. Notably, all these four comprehensive traits of character have hardly been found in the character of any single Prophet or Messenger. Some have been the embodiment of majesty and grandeur, others were gifted with beauty. The character of some others epitomised the knowledge, there are still others who were used by Allah ta'ala to be a manifestation of His Omnipotence and All- Powerfulness. Precisely

speaking,each flower possesses a flavour and the colour specific to its own entity.

Knowledge and its practical manifestations

In this context the knowledge and its practical manifestations obviously do not signify the sphere of knowledge pertaining to the Divine Law to be carved out to lay down the rules governing the human conduct. Nor is meant the area of knowledge which is about the natural rules governing the creation under the direct command of its Omnipotent Creator. The latter sphere of knowledge is exclusive to Allah *ta'ala* alone. As regards the former area of knowledge, every Prophet is undeniably granted by Allah *ta'ala* a fuller knowledge of this and he must excel all others of his followers in this domain of knowledge. As of the practical manifestations of this religious knowledge, each and every Prophet of Allah had been an embodiment of the religious virtues,far too away from sins and all moral evils. By their practical lives the Prophets of Allah have been a perfect example of virtue and offered the practical standards of a superlatively high human conduct to their people's. Knowledge and its practical manifestations in human conduct and morality, in this context,refer only to that kind of knowledge and its practical performance which form part of Prophetic nature and temperament. This kind of knowledge and its practical manifestations are not to be seen as an independent entity; it, rather, is found permeating across the entire body of the teachings the Prophets introduce to their addressees the way the sugar goes down the sweet drink. With no separate background, this knowledge and its practical

manifestations can not be separated from their noble teachings. Through a deeper study of the Prophets' lives a prudent and discreet historian may, however, feel quite consciously which Prophet's teachings and miracles are the manifestation of knowledge and which one show the dominance of the practical manifestations.

Religions of the past have been bereft of intellectual revolution

Judged from this standpoint, the majority of the Prophets of Allah are seen to be the epitome of the act and practice, with little care to the aspect of knowledge. Prophet Muhammad's life, in sharp contrast, offers a perfect blend of both knowledge and practice at once.

Insights into the wisdom and philosophy of the Divine commands

To illustrate the point, take, for example, the Tauraat and the Injeel, the heavenly Scriptures revealed to Musa and Issa (peace and blessings be upon them) respectively. Regardless of the fact that they, like all other heavenly-revealed scriptures excepting the Qur'an, have been subjected to repeated attempts at their textual as well as interpretive interpolations on the part of their so-called followers, their existing bodies contain a very good deal of the commands and Divine injunctions governing the concept and practice of the ritual purity, devotions, society and the situations of war and peace, etc. But, strangely enough, we hardly find any mention there in connection with the wisdom and philosophy underlying those commands and injunctions. We believe that those Messengers and the Prophets were granted the knowledge of the philosophy and wisdom of the commands and

injunctions of their Sharias. But the point to be made here is that the knowledge which is being talked about here is not with reference to the personal knowledge of those great respectable representatives of Allah ta'ala. It is absolutely about the knowledge and the guidance they imparted to their peoples and followers. The non-existence of such knowledge in their religious scriptures and the teachings makes little difference to the practical life of their followers, and hardly affects the practical sphere of their lives. The function of the wisdom and philosophy of the Divine Law and injunctions does not exceed that it gives impetus to the believing followers' thinking faculties. As a result, they take the religious commands and the Divine injunctions more deeply and a renewed activism. Contrastingly, the study of the Qur'an reveals that there is hardly any command or injunction addressed to mankind whose wisdom has not been mentioned there. While introducing a law to the people the Qur'an, first of all, prepares the believers mentally and intellectually by pointing to the wisdom underscoring that command. This in order to bring both the heart and brain into submission and place the human spirit under the command of intellect and reason. Much as it is the heart which is the dominant and rules over the entire being of the human, in situations of tension between the heart and intellect the reason and intellect seldom leaves the heart alone. To the same reality Iqbal the poet has pointed in his following poetical lines:

*Love jumped into the fire of Nimrod, carefree, fearless.
While the reason still continues to spectate the event.*

Good though is to keep the heart under the command of reason.

Yet, at times, let it work alone, unrestricted by the dictates of reason.

Need for Knowledge

However, equally possible being that sometimes there may arise a situation when reason, under special circumstances, may get a complete environment of rationality and rationalism. Under such situations the reason may dominate the the heart and conscience. Present age, for example, is marked by sheer rationalism. In such age it is quite inconceivable to live a life independent of the rule of reason over the heart. Since it was Islam itself which initiated the age of reason and science, it was quite necessary that, side by side filling the hearts of people with satisfaction and content, the reason, too, be guided along the lines of faith in the Unseen Realities, bringing it to submit readily to the Power of the Creator, the Ultimate Reality. Towards this purpose no better way was ever possible than to making mention of the underlying wisdom of the commands addressed to the human hearts. This is with the view to render a Muslim subservient to the Divine ordainments both physically and intellectually. Our emphasis on the rational interpretation of the Divine commands and injunctions must not be construed as seeing the reason to be a touchstone of judging the validity of the injunctions of the Shari'ah. As far as the commands of the Sharia are concerned, they are to be followed as such, in the full spirit of submission and total obedience to Allah ta'ala, without judging them from the reason and

intellectual standpoint. To be more precise, the role of reason in this respect does not exceed to be of an assistant. A believer as such is required to submit to the will of the Law-Giver in all matters of faith and the injunctions governing the practical sphere of his life, regardless of that those injunctions are rationally comprehensible or not. The majority of the commands and injunctions of the Sharia, however, are easily explainable in terms of reason and extents of human understanding. The rational explanations of most of the Qur'anic commands and injunctions offered by the Qur'an undoubtedly satisfies the reason and offer the satisfactory answer to the most of the questions arising out of the so-called rationalism of the age we are living in. Such rational explanations may shield the faith and belief against heresy and disbelief. Guarding the faith and belief is doubtlessly is the most urgent need of every and each man of faith in Islam, irrespective of the nature of the arm which may differ from age to age. To this point the Qur'an has been careful. In order to protect the faith it mentioned the wisdom and philosophy lying behind most of its commands, injunctions and prohibitions. To elaborate the point, following examples may be sufficient.

While giving the command of *salaat* (Prayer) the Qur'an explained its wisdom that, among other great benefits the *salaat* carries, it forbids indecency and evil. To quote the words of the Qur'an:

Verily, As-Salât (the prayer) prevents from Al-Fahshâ' (i.e. great sins of every kind, unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.) and Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief, polytheism, and every kind of evil wicked deed, etc.)[] and the remembering[] (praising, etc.) of (you by) Allâh (in front of

the angels) is greater indeed [than your remembering (praising, etc.) Allâh in prayers, etc.]. And Allâh knows what you do. (Al- Qur'an, 29:45)

Quite obviously, no society could ever attain spiritual and moral rectitude unless it disroots evil from its within and build itself on the remembrance of Allah ta'ala. The salaah, therefore, is essential for every society.

2. The Qur'an prohibited the consumption of wine and the games of chance. It, in the same breath, explained the reason of this prohibition in the following words:

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say:"In them is great sin, and some profit for men; but their sin is greater than their profit." (Al-Qur'an,2:219)

At another place the wine and gambling have been decried as devilish and evil deeds. This doubtlessly is meant to place hate in the hearts of Muslims vis-a-vis these acts and prepare them for a total prohibition of them in the Muslim society for ever.

O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, Al-Ansâb[], and Al-Azlâm (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitân's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.

Shaitân (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allâh and from As-Salât (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain? (Al -Maidah :90-91)

(3) The Qur'an commanded the Muslims to change their *Qiblah*. This was an important command in many respects. The reason which underlay this command, as

stated the Qur'an itself, was to distinguish between the people of true faith and those who had entered the fold of Islam out of other motives than a total submission and surrender to the will of Allah ta'ala. To cite the relevant Qur'anic reference here:

And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad SAW) from those who would turn on their heels (i.e. disobey the Messenger). Indeed it was great (heavy) except for those whom Allâh guided. And Allâh would never make your faith (prayers) to be lost (i.e. your prayers offered towards Jerusalem). Truly, Allâh is full of kindness, the Most Merciful towards mankind. (Al - Baqarah:143)

The Qur'an abounds in such references which seek to explain the reasons underlying the commands addressed to the human beings. There is hardly any other scripture, including the Bible and Ramaina, which provide such rational explanations of the commands they address to their followers. Therefore, it would be no exaggeration to say that while other Prophets were the manifestation of Allah's operations in His colossal universe, Muhammad, the Last Prophet (PBUH), was a manifestation of Allah's knowledge.

Basis of Science

As far as the intellectual and conceptual bases of science are concerned, no other scripture than the Qur'an invites the men to observe the operations of the Divine Scheme of Creation and pondering over the secrets of its smooth and unhindered working, a perfect coordination

between the opposing forces to yield the desired results. It is undeniably the Holy Quran which invited the men to this type of deep observation. We come across numerous references calling the men to ponder over the signs leading man to recognize the Creator and His omnipotence. By such references the Qur'an actually laid the foundations of the modern knowledge called science. This is yet another proof to the fact that Muhammad Rasool Allah excelled other Prophets in knowledge.

The Qur'an, the greatest miracle of the Prophet's knowledge

Look at the long list of the miracles of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Most of his miracles, as being the case with other Prophets of Allah as well, belong to the realm of practice and operation. His single miracle which far outweighs all other ones, and shall continue to exist till the last day of the world, being the Holy Qur'an. It is the only abiding miracle given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It is because of the fact that it belongs to the vast realm of knowledge. It has challenged the entire world to produce anything of comparable merit if its opponents believe it to be the work of a human being. This challenge still continues to be unmet, and will remain so till the Doom's Day. To cite just a Qur'anic reference here:

And if you (Arab pagans, Jews, and Christians) are in doubt concerning that which We have sent down (i.e. the Qur'ân) to Our slave (Muhammad Peace be upon him), then produce a Sûrah (chapter) of the like thereof and call

your witnesses (supporters and helpers) besides Allah if you are truthful. (Al-Qur'an,2:23)

The nature of this challenge,quite obviously,embraces the aspects of the knowledge it presents, its linguistic sublimity, its incomparably correct presentation of the facts profusely scattered around in the universe and the information it provides relating to the realm lying beyond the ken of sense- perception.

Primary difference between the nature of the miracles of other Prophets and the Qur'an, the great miracle given to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

No other Prophet was given such a great and comprehensive miracle as the Qur'an except Muhammad (PBUH). Most miracles of the Prophets preceding the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) belonged to their practices in different areas of human working. They obviously could last as long as lasted the lives of those Prophets. Noah's ark, the She-camel of the Prophet Salih, the singing of the rocks and birds with the Prophet David, Solomon's unprecedented government, the scenes of his travelling on the shoulders of the air,his subjugation of the jins,his understanding of the birds'l languages, inability of the Nimrod's fire to burn the Prophet Ibrahim,Prophet Ismail's miraculous living for a longer time even without the basics of the life support system, the miraculous performance of the Mosaic staff, gushing out of the water springs from the rock, the Prophet Jesus's bringing the dead to life, his curing the incurable sicknesses or his being raised over the heavens which we come across in the Qur'an and the history all were the miracles which left hardly any signs after the lives of their respective Prophets. All such

miracles of the Prophets of the past have actually paled into insignificance by comparison with the Holy Qur'an, the abiding miracle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This is, again, due to the fact that it belongs to the realm of knowledge. It is the Qur'an which launched the age of knowledge and enlightenment. This age will stay as long as stays the Qur'an to open newer vistas of its miraculous content of knowledge.

Some people of outstanding knowledge produced by the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were, and still are, able to produce the men of extraordinary knowledge, and by their intrinsic spiritual and intellectual value, have always been transforming innumerable people into the men of outstanding knowledge. The following names may, for instance, be mentioned here to give a just representational illustration of the point. The Rightly-guided Caliphs, Aisha Siddiqa, Abu Hurairah, And Allah bin Abbas, And Allah bin Masood, Ubai bin Ka'ab, Abd Allah bin Umar, Salman al-Farisi, Khalid bin Walid, and so on, to name just a few. These are the people so great in respect of their achievements and accomplishments that even the complete nations can not dare to claim parity with them. During the course of the later ages and subsequent centuries there appeared thousands of men of exceptional knowledge and learning in all areas of human life who enriched the human knowledge with unprecedented wealth of knowledge and experience. They are too many to be named. Their

achievements proved as beneficial to the subsequent generations as those of the Prophets of yore. The fountain of their benefits still holds great good even today.

Practical aspect of the all-out revolution brought about by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

As far as the practical aspect of his revolution is concerned, the great extents of it might well be assessed by the fact that in the long history of the prophethood there emerged no Prophet who could bring such a comprehensive revolution which left no aspect of human life unaffected. There emerged no Prophet except Muhammad (PBUH) who succeeded in bringing about a revolution which changed the course of human history for ever and saved the drowning boat of mankind from total destruction towards which it had been heading for centuries. By dint of this unprecedented revolution the Prophet (PBUH), within the span not exceeding two decades of his life, succeeded in bringing the entire Arabia under the spiritual and political yoke of the Divine religion and established the just rule of Islam over the known portion of the world of that time. This was indeed a great favour of Allah ta'ala to him and the entire world. To repeat the relevant Qur'anic reference here again:

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth, to proclaim it over all religion: and enough is Allah for a Witness. (al-Fath:28)

This Qur'anic verse speaks of the fact that Muhammad Rasul Allah was the Prophet of Revolution.

Apart from its nature, scope and the area of its effect and influence, every revolution is born out of a sound thinking and all-round great effort. Without courage, determination, knowledge, dedication and a team of solicitous and devoted workers no constructive revolution is imaginable to take place. Since the revolution brought about by Muhammad the Messenger of Allah is unprecedented in all respects, he must stand alone in the long list of those fortunate men blessed with the position of Prophet.

As of his miracles relating to the sphere of practice, they, too, are too many to count. Without undertaking a comparative study between the miracles of the preceding Prophets with those of Muhammad Rasul Allah, it may safely be claimed that the latter's miracles outshine those of his preceding Prophets in terms of efficiency, influence and strength. More so, the instances of the miracles given to the earlier ones are found in those granted by Allah ta'ala to Muhammad (PBUH) as well. Through the following poetical line the poet wants to express the same fact:

Beauty of Yusuf, the quickening influence of Isa, the shining hand of Musa,

The goodnesses of all you alone combine in your self.

The long list of Prophet Muhammad's miracles includes numerous miracles. Besides the common literature around *Seerah* which unfailingly makes mention of his miracles, there are many separate books have been written only to deal with his miracles. Imam Baihaqi's *Dalail -an- Nubbuwwah* and Imam Suyuti's *al- Khasais al-Kubra*, among others, are well-known books which treat the

theme in a more detailed manner and are regarded the best examples.

People of Action the Holy Prophet's Companionship Could Produce

The Companionship of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his noble teachings produced countless people in all ages of the long Islamic history in all areas of action and practice. To name here only a few:

Farooq Azam, Ali Murtaza, Khalid bin Walid, Hamza, Ja'afar Tayyar, Abdur Rahman bin Auf, Mu'az bin Jabal, Amr bin Aas, Mughirah bin Shabah, Sa'ad bin Waqqas, Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, Amir Muaviya, Imam Hussain and so on are so great persons whose instances could hardly be found in the histories of the earlier nations. Just like the earlier ages of the Islamic history its later ages, too, are by no way less exuberant.

During the course of the later phases of the great Islamic history there have always been emerging such great persons many of whom were singly able to form the history and each one out of them left indelible imprint on the course of human history. To name here only fewer of them:

Umar bini Abdul Aziz, Muhammad bin Qasim, Tariq bi Ziyad, Harun al- Rashid, Abdur Rahman bin Muhammad, Zubaida the wife of Harun al- Rashid, Nurud Din Al Zangi, Salahud Din Ayyubi, Yusuf bin Tashqin, Mahmoud bin Subuktagin, Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Muinud Din Chishti Ajmeri, Shamsud Din Altamish, Muhammad Khan the Second, the Conqueror of the Canstantinopol, Khuwaja Jahan the King of the

East,Zaheerud Din Muhammad Babar,Sher Shah Suri,Alamgir Aurang Zeb,Asif Jah the First Mir Qamrud Din Khan,Sultan Tipu Shahid,Sayyid Ahmad Shahid of Rai Bareili,Maulana Ismail Shahid, Shaikul Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan Deobadi, Maulana Muhammad Ali Mongeri, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani,Ubaid Allah Sindhi,Maulana Ilyas Kandhlavi,Ataullah Shah Bukari,and so on. These are the fewer ones out of the great people of ths Ummah each one of them outshines the several revolutionary leaders of the past. In short,besides the knowledge, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) outweighs the Prophets of the past in the world of action and practice as well.

An outstandingly significant aspect of Muhammad Rasulullah's Prophetic accomplishment

The most outstanding aspect of Muhammad Rasulullah's Prophetic accomplishment is an uninterrupted continuation of his movement. This will remain so as long as the last day of the world. The mothers of this Great Community will uninterruptedly be giving birth to such people who will keep the light of his Message alive ang bringing constructive revolutions to reconstruct the destructed and enlivening the dead. Since the earlier religious systems now stand interpolated, their large followings have natully turned sterile to revive their messages and infuse the spirit of life into them once again. The glimpses of knowledge and culture which we notice in those nations today are the traces of the Islamic teachings which have been able to make inroads into almost all aspects of the lives of their adherents. It is unfortunate that

sustained efforts are being made to deface this shining history. But all such efforts,if Allah ta'ala wills,are doomed to frustrate and bear no result.

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CHAPTER SIX

THE ONLY REFUGE FOR ALL HUMANITY

نَكَ لِئَصِلَ الرَّحْمَ وَتَحْمِلَ الْكُلَ وَتَكْسِبَ الْمَعْدُومَ وَتَقْرِيَ الضَّيْفَ وَتَعِينَ
عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ (الجامع الصحيح للبخارى ج ١ ص ٢ حديث نمبر : ٣)

You join the ties of relationship, you speak
the truth, you bear people's burdens, you
help the destitute, you entertain guests and
you mitigate the pains and grief's suffered for
the sake of truth. " (Bukhari).

HUMANITY AT THE THRESHOLD OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (SAWS)

Upon whom be peace who remained clung to the mendicity even in the position of kingship;

Be peace upon whom who always helped the weak, the poor, the helpless.

Every expression of our Prophet's life is unique and matchless. Every act he ever performed constitutes a role-model for humanity and every footstep of his *seerh* lights the path for the world. In short,

Muhammad Rasul Allah (PBUH) holds the most outstanding position in the midst of the Prophets and those blessed by Allah with the high favour of Messengership. With his Messengership worldwide, his door is always open to all, with no restrictions to keep any person away. He treated the friends and foes alike without entertaining the considerations of colour, cast, social standing or their racial and tribal affiliations. Nobody ever returned unsatisfied from his court. The only thing which mattered here to get benefit were only the love and solicitude one had in one's heart towards Allah, His religion and His Messenger. The Prophet (PBUH) always abhorred all kinds of extremism. He loved moderation and simplicity instead.

Before his advent as Prophet

Born with a nature highly magnanimous, his magnanimity and kindnesses towards one and all was a most salient feature of his life even before his advent and accession to the Final Prophethood. Extending his helping hand to the poor, the widows, the orphans, the afflicted was his second nature. His wife Khadija's abovementioned consolatory observation doubtlessly offers a highly

credible testimony in this regard. For it is based on direct experience extended over period as long as fifteen years.

After his Advent

After his advent and assuming the responsibilities of the Final Messengership his magnanimity assumed even wider proportions. He was raised as the Mercy towards the entire mankind. There was no question at all now to neglect the weaker and afflicted sections of human society. Jabir bin Abdullah related that whenever the Prophet (PBUH) was asked for a thing, he never said 'no. Abdullah bin Abbas observed that in so far as the magnanimity and meeting the needs of people the Prophet (PBUH) was always faster than the fast-blowing wind. On the authority of Abu Zar Ghifari Imam Bukari reported: Addressing Abu Zar, the Prophet (PBUH) said "I'm not pleased to have gold equal to the Uhud mountain and keep it unspent even for a period of three days. From this inconceivably greater amount I may withhold with me only the amount equal to repay a debt. I will give it to the people from all sides, caring nothing to worry about. "

Always careful towards the poor

Towards the poor he was so considerate that for their sake he neglected even his dears and the family members. He himself suffered privations and underwent hardships but met the needs of the poor and the needy.

He refused Fatima's request for a servant

Fatima was the Prophet's dearest daughter. In the events of his blessed *Seerah* we find that he refused to give

a servant to his beloved daughter Fatima when she came to him and, appraising him of her plight she had long been suffering in doing the household chores, requested him for a domestic aide. He instead instructed her to say some words whereby to celebrate the remembrance of Allah. Being a great daughter of the great Prophet, she returned back to her home with full satisfaction of her heart.

Love of God and Deep Concern for his Ummah

The holy Prophet was the Messenger of God, the chosen and the exalted, whose all sins, ³⁵⁸ foregoing and coming, had been forgiven by the Lord, yet he was the most painstaking, eager and earnest in paying homage to God.

Al-Mughira b. Sh'uba reported that the Prophet once got up at night and stood praying for such a long time that his feet became swollen. On being asked why he did this when all of his former and later sins had been forgiven, he replied, "What! should I not be a grateful servant (of God)?" ³⁵⁹

'Aisha relates that the Messenger of God once kept awake throughout the night till morning reciting only one verse. Reporting the same event Abu Dharr says that the

³⁵⁸ The prophets of God are impeccable and protected even against committing minor mistakes.

³⁵⁹ Bukhari has mentioned this Tradition in his commentary on Surah al-Fath while Tirmidhi and Nusai narrate it in connection with the nightly vigils of the Prophet.

Prophet kept praying throughout the night reciting one verse until the dawn appeared. The verse he recited was:

“If Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgive them, lo! Thou, only Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.”³⁶⁰

‘Aisha says, "The Messenger of God took to fast to such an extent that we thought he would never give it up, and when he would go without fasting we thought that perhaps he would never fast again.”³⁶¹

Anas reports that whoever wanted to see the Prophet praying at night could do so³⁶² and similarly one could see him sleeping.

‘Abdullah b. ash-Shikhkhir says that once he went to see the Prophet. , He was then offering prayers and sobbing—the sound emitting from his chest was like that of a boiling pot. ³⁶³

The Messenger was never at ease except when he performed the prayers. It seemed that even after saying his prayers, he eagerly looked forward to the time when he would again be paying homage to God. The Messenger often remarked: "The comfort of my eyes lies in prayers.”³⁶⁴

The Companions of the Prophet relate that whenever he had any trouble he used to prostrate in supplication to God. ³⁶⁵

³⁶⁰ *Tirmidhi (Q. 5:118)*

³⁶¹ *Nasai and Ibn Majah.*

³⁶² *Bukhari, Kitabul-Tahajjud.*

³⁶³ *Shama’il Tirmidhi*

³⁶⁴ *Nasa’i*

³⁶⁵ *Abu Dawud*

"Whenever the wind blew at night", says Abu Dardā', "the Messenger of God took shelter in the mosque until it became calm. And whenever there was a solar or lunar eclipse, the Prophet got up in trepidation seeking refuge from God until it was over and the sky was clear. "³⁶⁶ The Messenger always seemed solicitous to commemorate with God; uneasy and restless until he had again fell prone before the Lord. Oftentimes he sent for Bilāl and said, "Bilāl, rāke arrangements for holding prayers and put me at ease. "³⁶⁷

Indifference to the World

Not the best words in their best order in any language can adequately depict the way God's Messenger looked at dirham and dinar, wealth and property and the world and all that it stands for. Indeed, even the disciples who had served their time at the feet of the Messenger's Companions or the disciples of such disciples never regarded fortunes and treasure fit enough for the dust-hole. Their pure and pious lives, their indifference to wealth and worldly possessions, the way they showered bounty on one and all and preferred others over their own selves, their contentedness with the barest minimum and their heroic selflessness and self-denial take one's breath away. One can only picture to oneself the nobleness of heart and openhanded generosity as well as self-

³⁶⁶ Tabrani

³⁶⁷ Abu Dawūd

abnegation and unearthly disposition of the great teacher who had enlarged the minds of all the later godly souls.

We shall, therefore, cite here only a few of those authentic reports which have been handed down by the most trust worthy narrators since the Prophet's own words and actions can best-illustrate his outlook and sentiments in this regard.

Two of the well-known sayings of the Messenger of God which sum up his attitude towards worldly life are:"O God, life is truly the life of the hereafter", and"What have I to do with the world! My only business with it is like that of a rider who shades himself under a tree, then goes off and leaves it. "³⁶⁸

'Umar once saw the Messenger lying on a reed mat which had left its marks on his body. 'Umar gave way to tears at the frugal living and privation of his mentor. The Prophet asked, "What's the matter, 'Umar?" He replied, "O Messenger of God, of all the creatures of God, you are the most venerated, but it is the Caesar and the Chosroes who ate rolling in the lap of luxury. " 'Umar's reply made the Messenger's blood boil in anger and his face became red. He said, " 'Umar, have you any doubt about it?" Then he added, "These are the men who have been given all the pleasures of life in advance here in this world. "³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Abu Dawud.

³⁶⁹ See Sahiyayn for the full report.

For himself and his family he chose a life of austerity and hardship

The life of ease was rejected by God's Messenger not only for his own self but also for his dependents as well. He was heard praying, "O God, make the provision of Muhammad's family sufficient only to sustain life. "³⁷⁰ Abu Huraira says, "By Him in whose hands is Abu Huraira's life, the Messenger of God and his family never had the wheat bread continuously for three days until he departed from this world. "³⁷¹

'Aisha relates, "We, the members of the Prophet's household caught sight of one moon and then the next, but no fire was lighted in our hearth. We had to live only on dates and water. " ³⁷²

The Prophet's coat of mail had been pawned with a Jew but he had not enough money to get it back from him. The Messenger of God departed from the world of mail was still with the Jew.

The Prophet proceeded to perform the Farewell Pilgrimage followed by a huge crowd which obscured the horizon at a time when the entire Arabian Peninsula had acknowledged his spiritual and temporal supremacy. Yet, the saddle of his dromedary was outworn covered by a sheet which was worth not more than four dirhams. The prayer he then sent up to God was, "O Allah, make it a Haj unallowed of all pretensions and show. "³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Bukhari, Kitab-ur-Ruqaq; Muslim, Kitab uz-Zuhd.

³⁷¹ Bukhari, Muslim.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Tirmidhi.

Abu Dharr reports the Messenger telling him on an occasion, "I would hate to possess as much gold as Mount Uhud and then to allow three days to pass with a single dinar remaining with me except that which I may hold back for the cause of religion rather, I would give it away to God's servants this way and that on my right and left and in the back. "³⁷⁴

Jabir b. 'Ahdullah says that it never happened that the God's Messenger was requested to give anything and he said 'No' in reply. Ibn 'Abbās testifies that in generosity and bountifulness the Messenger of God was swifter than the wins of the wind. "³⁷⁵

Anas says that once when a man asked the Messenger to give him something he gave him a flock of sheep enough to fill the space between two hillocks. The man returned to his people and said to them, "O you people, embrace Islam. Muhammad (peace be upon him) gives so open-handedly as if he fears not poverty. " Another time, ninety thousand dirhams were presented to the Prophet. He asked to heap them up on a mat and then started giving it away. Nobody who asked for it was denied until the entire heap of money: disappeared.

Natural Disposition

The holy Prophet had an excessive zeal for devotions to God, his uninterrupted communion with the Lord took the shape of extensive orisons and vigils,

³⁷⁴ Bukhari and Muslim. The version narrated in the Sahih Bukhari reads, "I would disdain to possess as much gold as Uhud. . . "

³⁷⁵ See the full version in the Sahihain.

supplications and lamentations and his indifference to the world surpassed the abstinence of hermits and ascetics but he was never wanting in sympathy and compassion, courteous and mannerly behaviour to one and all; nor was he ever lacking in restoring justice to one whom it was denied or in bidding welcome to everyone according to his status and position. According to the wont of human nature, these were perhaps the strongest unidentical traits blended together in the character of the Prophet. Once he said to Anas, "If you had known what I know, you would have laughed ever so little and wept a great deal."³⁷⁶

The Messenger came of the noblest stock, yet he was very modest, exceedingly large-hearted and most sweet-tempered; he never kept aloof from his Companions; cherished a kind and tender disposition towards the children and often took them in his lap; accepted the invitation to take meals with the: slaves and maidservants, the poor and the indigent; visited the sick even if he had to go to the farthest corner of the city and always accepted the excuses offered for misdeeds.³⁷⁷ He was never seen stretching his legs whilst sitting with his Companions lest anyone of them should feel inconvenience.

'Abdullah b. al-Hārith reports that he had not seen anyone smiling so often and with a more cheerful disposition than the Messenger of God.³⁷⁸ Jābir b. Samurah says that he had joined the sittings of the

³⁷⁶ Abu Nu'aym Hilyat ul-Auliya.

³⁷⁷ Shama'il Tirmidhi.

³⁷⁸ Shama'il Tirmidhi.

Messenger and his Companions more than a hundred times. He saw the Companions listening and reciting poems, describing some incident of the pagan past while the Messenger of God either sat silently or smiled with them at some amusing remark. Sharid states that the Prophet asked him to recite the verses of Umayya b. Abi as-Salt and he recited them. ³⁷⁹

The Messenger was extremely kindhearted and affectionate—the finest human sentiments and virtues were discernible in his character. Anas b. Mālik heard God's Messenger saying to Fatima, "Bring my two soils. ³⁸⁰ In a moment they came running and the Prophet kissed and embraced them. ³⁸¹ Another time the Prophet summoned his grandson, Hasan b. 'Ali. He came running and falling in the Prophet's lap, passed his fingers through his beard. The Prophet opened his mouth while Hasan's saliva fell in his mouth. ³⁸²

Fatima tells that when the Prophet's freedman Zayd b. Flāritha came to Madina, the Prophet was in his house. Zayd knocked at the door. The Prophet immediately got up to greet him although he was not properly dressed. His man tie hanging loosely on his shoulders, he went out to receive Zayd, shook hands with him and kissed him. ³⁸³

³⁷⁹ Al-Adab al-Mufrad lil Bukhari, p. 127, Umayya b. Ali as-Salt was a pre-Islamic poet whose verses are chiefly on religious topics. He was a monotheist contemporary with the Prophet.

³⁸⁰ Hasan and Husain.

³⁸¹ Tirmidhi, Merits of Hasan and Husain.

³⁸² Al-Adab al-Mufrad lil Bukhari, p. 173.

³⁸³ Tirmidhi.

Usāma b. Zayd reports that one of the Prophet's daughters sent him a message telling him that a son of hers was at the ebb of life, 'asking him to come to her. The Prophet sent her greetings, saying at the same time, "What God has taken away belongs to Him and what He has given belongs to Him, and He has appointed a time for everyone; so she ought to show endurance and seek her reward from God. " She then sent for him adjuring to come to her, and he got up to go accompanied by us. The boy who was at the last gasp was brought to the Prophet who took him in his lap, his eyes overflowing with tears. S'ad asked, "What is this, O Messenger of God?" He replied, "This is compassion which God deposits in the hearts of His servants whom He will Verily, God shows compassion to those who are compassionate. "³⁸⁴

When the prisoners taken in the battle of Badr including 'Abbās were tied, the Messenger could not sleep because of the groaning of 'Abbas. The Ansār, on coming to know the Prophet's uneasiness, untied him. The Prophet was pleased with the Ansār but when it was suggested to him that 'Abbās should be set free on payment of an indemnity, he refused the request since he did not like to discriminate between 'Abbas and other prisoners. ³⁸⁵

A Bedouin came to the Messenger and said, "You kiss your children but we do not. " The Messenger replied,

³⁸⁴ Bukhari.

³⁸⁵ Fath ul Bari, Vol VIII, p. 324.

"What can I do if God has withdrawn compassion from your heart." ³⁸⁶

The Prophet was extremely kind to the children and was always considerate and benevolent to them. Anas says that God's Messenger passed by some children who were playing. The Prophet greeted them. ³⁸⁷ He also reports that the Prophet used to mingle with us and ask my younger brother, "Abu 'Umayr, What has happened to your bird?" ³⁸⁸

Being too solicitous and well disposed to the Muslims, the Messenger of God was very tolerant and overlooked their occasional weariness and boredom.

'Abdullah b. ' Mas'ud says that the Prophet used to inter-pace his exhortations and counsels to the people lest they should not, get tired with them. Although prayer was most pleasing to him, he always used to cut it short if the cry of any child reached his ears. He said once, "When I stand up for prayers I intend to make it long, but when I hear any child crying I shorten it for fear that his mother might be distressed." ³⁸⁹

Abu Mas'ud narrates that someone said to the Prophet, "O Messenger of God, I swear by Allah that I keep away from the morning prayer on account of so and so who makes it too long." Ibn Mas'ud further says that he never saw the Messenger more angry than he saw him while giving an exhortation after that incident. He said, "There are some among you who scare the people away; so

³⁸⁶ Bukhari, on the authority of 'Aisha.

³⁸⁷ Bukhari.

³⁸⁸ Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 40.

³⁸⁹ Bukhari, Kitab-us-Salat.

whoever of you leads a prayer, lie ought to be brief, for there are the weak and the aged and those who have a "business to attend. "³⁹⁰

It is also related that Anjasha was a singer of camel-songs who had a beautiful voice and used to lead the dromedaries of women. Anjasha's melodious singing made the camels go quickly which disturbed the women. Hence the Prophet said to him, "Gently, Anjasha, do not break the glass vessels. "³⁹¹

God had made the Messenger's heart as clear as, crystal, bearing no ill-will against anybody. Once he said to his Companions, "None of you should denounce another before me, for I like to come out to you without any ill-feeling. "³⁹²

God's Messenger was benign and gracious to all the Muslims like their father. He treated everyone of them like his family members as if they were 'his own charge. Or, the affection he had for them was like that of a mother for her child, for he had never had an eye to their wealth and property or their prosperity but lie always deemed it his duty to lighten their burdens and to clear their debts. He used to say, "Whoever leaves some property as a legacy, it belongs to his heirs, but hi's unpaid debts are my responsibility. "³⁹³

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 185, Bukhari and Muslim. The Prophet indicated, figuratively, the weakness and delicacy of women who were put to trouble by the faster pace of the camels.

³⁹² Kitab-us-Shifa, p. 55.

³⁹³ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Istegrad.

There is yet another reliant citing the Messenger: "No Muslim has a patron closer unto him than I ; or, if you wish, recite the verse :³⁹⁴ 'The Prophet is closer to the believers than their selves;' for the property Left by anyone goes to his nearest kins whoever they may be: hut if one dies leaving a debt, he (the creditor) should come to me since I am the patron of the deceased and responsible to discharge his debts. "³⁹⁵

Moderation and Seemliness

The cardinal virtues of the Prophet, the niceness and seamless of his character, which would remain a shining example of decorous behaviour for the coming genetics, present as well as future, consisted of his innate moderation, refined taste and gracefulness, restraint and temperateness and unexcessiveness which always kept him on the middle path. 'Aisha relates that the God's Messenger was never given his choice between two things without taking the easier course provided it involved no sin; for, if it did, no one kept farther away from it than he. ³⁹⁶

The Prophet disliked pretension and airiness no less than he detested asceticism, self-mortification and renouncement of what was the just claim of one's body and soul.

Abu Huraira reported the Messenger as saying, , "The religion is facility, but if anyone overdoes it, it wears him down; so take to moderation and steer an even

³⁹⁴ Q. 33:6.

³⁹⁵ Bukhari.

³⁹⁶ Muslim.

course; approximate yourselves to handiness and be cheering, and get strength through prayer in the morning, the evening, and some of the part of darkly night. "

The Prophet also advised "Lo! exert only as much as you have strength, for, by God, Allah would never get tired but you would grow weary. " Ibn 'Abbās relates that the Messenger of God was asked about the religion most liked by God. He replied. "The religion of ease and sincerity. " ³⁹⁷

'Abdullah b. Mas'ūd reported God's Messenger as saying, "They are doomed who overdo or deal sternly or are given to hair-splitting. " ³⁹⁸

The Companions sent by the Messenger for the education of or exhortation to any tribe were commanded by him : "Make it easy, not hard, gladden the hearts, don't scare them away. "

'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al'As tells that the Prophet said, "God likes to see the marks of His bounty on His servant. " ³⁹⁹

The Prophet in His House

The Messenger of God occupied himself at his home like a common man. As 'Aisha relates, he used to clean his clothes, milch the sheep and himself do his odd jobs. She also says that he would mend his clothes, repair his shoes and do similar other works. When asked how

³⁹⁷ Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 181.

³⁹⁸ Muslim.

³⁹⁹ Tirmidhi, Abwab al-Adab. The Prophet meant that if a man blessed with prosperity led a miserable and shabby existence like a beggar, he showed his ungratefulness to God.

the Prophet occupied himself at home, she replied, "He used to keep himself busy in household chores and went out when the Lime for prayer came. " ⁴⁰⁰

In another report related on her authority) she is reported to have said, "The Prophet of God used to repair his shoes, mend his clothes and occupied himself at home even as any of you occupy yourself. " ⁴⁰¹

'Aisha relates, "God's Messenger was very softhearted, the kindest of all. He laughed often and smiled much. " ⁴⁰² Anas says that he had not seen a man who was more clement and nice to his household members than the Messenger of God. " ⁴⁰³ It is related on the authority of 'Aisha that the Prophet said, "The best of you is one who is most nice to his wife and children and I am the nicest among you. " ⁴⁰⁴

Abu Huraira said that the Prophet never expressed disapproval of any food, if he desired, he ate it, and if he disliked he left it alone. " ⁴⁰⁵

Selflessness

It was a settled principle with the Prophet that he always kept to the fore his own kith and kin and those who were nearer to him in facing a risk or hazard but allotted them the last place in distributing favours and rewards and spoils of war. When the three well-known swordsmen

⁴⁰⁰ Bukhari.

⁴⁰¹ Musannaf by Abd-al-Razzaq, Vol. XI, p. 260.

⁴⁰² Ibn 'Asakir.

⁴⁰³ Musnad Ahmad and Muslim, On the authority of Anas.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibn Majah

⁴⁰⁵ Bukhari and Muslim

of Quraysh, 'Utba b. Rabi'a, Shayba b. Rabi'a and Walid b. 'Utba, challenged the Muslims to a single combat at Badr, the Prophet sent forward Hamza, 'All and 'Ubayda although he knew about the valour-of-enemy combatants and also had a number of veterans among the Muhājirin and the Ansār who could have successfully tilted with the Qurayshite battlers. All the three, Hamza, 'All and 'Ubayda, belonged to the Prophet's own clan, Banu Hāshim, and were his nearest relatives. They were also held dear by him but the Messenger, disliked to imperil others for the sake of keeping his kindred out of danger. God helped the three to emerge successful in the combat; Hamza and 'Ali came back safe and triumphant while 'Ubayda was brought back mortally wounded.

Again, when the Prophet disallowed usury and abolished blood vengeance belonging to the pre-Islamic period on the occasion of Farewell Pilgrimage he declared, "The usury of the pre-Islamic period is abolished, and the first of our usury I abolish is that of 'Abbās b. 'Abdul Muttalib. Claims of blood vengeance belonging to the pagan past have been abolished and the first of those murdered among us whose blood vengeance I remit is that of the son of Rabi'a b. al-Hārith. "⁴⁰⁶

Unlike the kings, rulers and political leaders the Prophet of God always kept his kins and kindreds in the background, giving preference to others in giving out gifts and rewards. 'All relates that Fatima had to work hatch in grinding corn. So, when she got the news that

⁴⁰⁶ Muslim, Kitab-ul-Haj on the authority of Jabir b. 'Abdullah.

some slave girls had been brought to the Prophet, she went to him and requested him for one to be given to her. The Prophet, however, did not accede to her request. Fatima then mentioned the matter to 'Aisha who talked to the Prophet about Fatima's trouble. Relating this incident 'Ali

says:

"The Messenger of God visited us when we had gone to bed. We were about to get up but he told us to stay where we were. He then sat down near me and. I felt the coldness of his feet on my chest. He then said, "Let me guide you to something better than what you have asked. When you go to bed, say Subhan Allah (Glory be to God) thirty-three time, Alham-du-lillah (Praise be to God) thirty-three times, and Allah-o-Akbar (God is most great) thirty-four times. This. will be better for you than a servant. "⁴⁰⁷

In another report of the same incident handed down through another source, the Prophet is also reported to have said, "By God, I cannot give you anything at the time when the bellies of lily Companions of Suffa⁴⁰⁸ have been hollowed by hunger. I have nothing to meet their expenses and I will sell these to provide for them. "

Instinctive Sublimeness

Great was the responsibility lying on the Messenger; publication of God's truth in its purity,

⁴⁰⁷ Bukhari, Kitab ul-Jihad.

⁴⁰⁸ A raised platform at the mosque in Madina where lived poor Companions desirous of remaining in attendance upon the Prophet.

inviting the people to be take the path of truth and virtue, guarding and guiding the nascent Islamic community and the cares and anxieties for the suffering humanity were the charges heavier than flesh and blood can bear. In between all these worries, stresses and strains we find the most sublime instincts of grace and goodness reflecting his worthiness and excellence of heart. In spite of his dauntless spirit of resolution and singleness of purpose which have always been the distinguishing features of the prophets, the Messenger of God could never forget those faithful friends and Companions who had accepted his mission in its initial stages and made the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives in the battle of Uhud. He always used to talk about them, invoked divine blessings for them and not often paid a visit to them.

Such was this immortal love, with an element of the transcendent in it, that it had gone beyond the flesh and blood and penetrated the inanimate hills and stones and ravines where these brilliant spectacles of noble love and sacrifice had been enacted. His Companions relate that they heard him saying, "This is the hill that loves me and to love it."⁴⁰⁹

Anas b. Mālik says that when the Messenger of God caught sight of the Uhud, he said, "This is the hill that loves me and I love it." Abi Humayd reports that he accompanied the Messenger while returning from Tabūk. When they came near Madina, the Prophet of God said,

⁴⁰⁹ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

"This is Tāba, ⁴¹⁰ and this is the hill which loves me and I love it. "⁴¹¹

‘Uqba tells that God’s Messenger went to the martyrs of the Uhud and prayed for their salvation. ⁴¹² Jabir b. ‘Abdullah relates that when the martyrs of the Uhud were once mentioned to the Prophet he said, swear to God that I would have liked to be sleeping with these martyrs by the side of this hill. "

The Messenger had borne with equanimity the shock of Hamza's death, who had been his loving uncle as well as foster-brother and had parted with his life fighting valiantly for the cause of Islam. He had also remained calm and composed on what had been done with Hamza’s dead body. But, when he passed by the houses of Bani ‘Abdul Ashhal while returning to Madina, he heard the lamentations over the dead. Overcome with the grief for the departed comrade, his eyes gave way to tears and he said, "But there are no women to mourn over Hamza !"⁴¹³

But these instincts and emotions, howsoever noble and sublime and overflowing with the milk of human kindness, were never allowed by the Messenger of God to enslave his mission or to disrupt the divine injunctions. Historians and biographers of the Prophet relate that when S’ad b. Mu’ād and Usayd b. Hudayr came back to the settlement of Bani ‘Abdul Ashhal, they ordered their women to grieve themselves and go and weep

⁴¹⁰ Madina Tayyaba.

⁴¹¹ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 95. Ahmad has narrated this report on the authority of Ibn ‘Umar.

for Hamza. They did as they had been told and when the Messenger came he found them weeping at the door of his mosque. But, he told them, "May God have mercy on you, go back; your presence has been enough for my consolation. " It has been narrated by another companion that on seeing the women the Messenger asked "What is it?" When he was told that the Ansār had sent their women to weep over Hamza, he invoked God's mercy for the Ansār and paid compliments to them for their love to him but also added, "I did not mean that. I do not like lamentation over the dead. . " Thereafter the Messenger forbade mourning for the dead. ^{'414}

An occasion still more poignant it was when Wahshi, the slayer of Hamza, called upon the Messenger of God, The conquest of Mecca by the Muslims was deemed by the enemies of Islam as the darkest hour of their lives. A number of them had no hesitation in reaching the decision that it would now be well-nigh impossible for them to remain at Mecca; they decided to migrate to Syria, Yemen or some other place for the fear, of their lives. Their friends, however, told them: "Woe to Muhammad (peace be upon him) does not kill anyone enters his religion. "Almost all these former enemies returned and embraced Islam. None of them had the least speck of fear in his heart on appearing before the Messenger after pledging allegiance to Islam, nor did the Messenger say a word to cast any doubt on their sincerity or to terrify them. And so it happened with Wahshi also. The Messenger of God learnt from Wahshi after he had

⁴¹⁴ Ibn Kathir, Vol. III, p. 96.

accepted Islam, how he had killed Hamza. It was but natural that the Prophet was grieved and harrowed to know 'about the ghastly crime of Wahshi, but he did not allow his irritation to get the better of his responsibility as the Messenger of God. He neither refused to admit Wahshi to the fold of Islam nor had him slain for his crime. All he said to Wahshi was, 'O man, hide your face from me and never let me see you again:-" Wahshi used to avoid the Messenger of God so that he should not see him, until the time arrived for the Messenger's departure. ⁴¹⁵

These nobler emotions or tender feelings reflecting warm heartedness of the Prophet were laid bare when he visited an old, dilapidated grave. Then, those with him found him in a turn: ii, and he said, "This is the grave of Amina. " This was long, ___ years after the death of the Messenger's mother. ⁴¹⁶

Mildness, Courtesy and Forbearance

In his good manners, gentleness, cordiality, sympathy forbearance the Messenger of God has left a perpetual and living example of noble behaviour for the entire humanity. To tell truth, he stood on such an exalted plane of graceful and polite deportment that God has paid him a glowing compliment in the Qur'an.

"And verily thou art of a high and noble disposition"⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁵ Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, p. 72, Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

⁴¹⁶ Baihaqi, on the authority of Sufyān Thauri, Ibn Kathir, Vol. I, p. 236.

⁴¹⁷ Q. 68:4.

The Messenger once told the Companions, "God has Himself disciplined me and disciplined in the best manner. "

Jabir reported the Messenger as saying, "God has raised me for the completion of moral virtues and seemly behaviour. "⁴¹⁸

When 'Aisha was questioned about the character of the Prophet, she replied, "Qur'an was his character. "⁴¹⁹

Indeed, such were his tolerance and forbearance, sympathy, graciousness and large heartedness that even the painters of soul with the gift of speech would seldom find words adequate to catch his likeness. Had the accounts about him not been handed down with the greatest caution by the most trustworthy narrators, it would have been difficult for one to accept them. But all these accounts have been transmitted with the greatest care by very many narrators, each testifying the piety, veracity, acumen and intelligence of the other from whom he learnt of an event, and, then, the reports transmitted through different sources and channels so corroborate one another that in their genuineness and authenticity form a class by themselves in the entire continuous and methodical records of public events. There is, thus, not the least doubt that every unbiased student of these records will come to the conclusion that never has there existed a historical document which was more firmly based on facts or better authenticated by, external and

⁴¹⁸ Sharh-s-Sunnah and Mishkat-ul-Masabih, p. 514.

⁴¹⁹ Muslim.

eternal evidence than the Traditions of the Prophet which represent the climax of the science of history.

Instances of his overlooking, pardoning and forgiveness

A few incidents given here illustrate the Prophet's tenderness and mercy towards the people. Clemency of the merciful Messenger of God made no distinction between a friend and a foe. 'Abdullah b. Ubayy was the leader of hypocrites whose revengeful attitude had always created difficulties for the Prophet. But, when he died and had been placed in his grave, the Messenger of God arrived and asked him to be taken out. He then placed him on his knees, blew some of his saliva over him, and clothed him with his shirt.⁴²⁰

Anas reports: "Once when I was walking with the Prophet who was wearing a Najrâni cloak with coarse fringe, a nomadic Arab met him and gave his cloak a violent tug. I saw that the man's tug had left a mark on the neck of God's Messenger. The nomad said, 'Command that I be given some of the Gad's property you have, Muhammad (SAW). ' The Messenger turned round to him and laughed, and then ordered that he should be given something."⁴²¹

Zayd b. S'ana came to the Prophet and demanded payment of the money owed by the Prophet. Then he violently pulled the Prophet's cloak from his shoulder, caught hold of it and addressed him rudely, saying, "You

⁴²⁰ Abdullah b. Ubayy died in 9 A. H. , after his return from Tabuk Ar-Zurqani, Vol. III, pp. 112-13; Bukhari.

⁴²¹ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Jihad, Musnad Ahmad, Vol. III, p. 153.

son of 'Abdul Muttalib are dilly-dallying. " 'Umar rebuked and reproached him but the Prophet kept smiling and said to 'Umar, "This Inanvas entitled to a better treatment from you. You ought to have advised me to repay the loan promptly and asked him to make his demand politely. " Then, turning to Zayd, the Prophet said, "There are still three days to go for the appointed time for repayment. " At the same time he asked 'Umar to repay the loan and give Zayd twenty s'af more so as to compensate him for his threatening attitude towards Zayd. The gracious and obliging behavior of the God's Messenger caused Zayd to embrace Islam. ⁴²²

Anas relates that once a band of eighty armed men of Mecca suddenly appeared at Wadi Tan'yem with the intention of making a sudden attack on the Messenger of God. They were all made captives but the Messenger spared their lives. '

Relating an incident when Jabir went with the Messenger of God on an expedition, he says, "At mid-day the time for a siesta came during the journey. The valley was full of Thorny bushes. The Messenger of God went to take rest under an acacia tree on which he hung his sword. We also dispersed to take a break under different trees. All of a sudden the Prophet called us and we saw that a nomadic Arab was sitting by his side. When we went to him he said, 'I was sleeping when this man came and unsheathed my sword against me. When I awoke I saw him standing over my head with the drawn sword, and he was asking me: 'Who can now protect, you from me?' I

⁴²² Ahmad, Vol. III, p. 153.

replied, 'Allah' and he sheathed the sword. Then he sat down and now he is before you. " It is related that God's Messenger did not exact any vengeance from the nomad.

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Every companion of the Prophet was sufficiently forbearing to throw the most godly soul into shade but the long-suffering patience of God's Messenger rose above the patience of all of them. He was their kindhearted teacher and mentor and guide from , whom all drew inspiration. An incident related by Abu Huraira illustrates the breadth and bigness of the Messenger's heart. Once a Bedouin passed urine in the holy Mosque. The Companions jumped at him and grabbed him for the sacrilegious act, but the Messenger commanded, "Let him alone. Pour a bucket or two of water over what he has passed, for you have been sent to make things easy and not to make things difficult."424

Another companion, Mu'āwiya b. al-Hakam reports, "I sneezed while praying along with the Messenger of God and said: 'God have mercy on you!' The people around stared down at me, so I said, 'Woe is me! What do you mean by looking askance at me?' They began to strike their hands on their thighs. Now I understood that they wanted me to be silent and I kept quiet. When the Messenger of God finished his prayer— for whom I would give my father and mother as ransom as no teacher better than him I have seen before or after; for, by God, he neither rebuked, nor beat, nor reviled me—he simply

423 Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Maghazi.

424 Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Wadu.

said to me, 'No talk is fitting during the prayer, for it consists only of the glorification of God, declaration of His greatness and recitation of 'the Quran. "⁴²⁵

Anas has also related many an instance of the Prophet's leniency, sympathy and noble mindedness. He says that God's Messenger was too generous and kind. If anybody in need approached him for anything, he gave it to him or at least made a promise for the same. Once, when the Messenger had taken his place to lead the prayer, a desert Arab stepped forward and holding his cloak said, "I stand in need but I fear lest I should forget it. " The Prophet went with him and prayed after he had satisfied him.

Speaking of the indulgent and long-suffering nature of the Messenger Anas has cited certain instances of the time when he was a young lad. He says, "I served the Prophet of God for ten years but he never blamed me for doing or not doing anything. " ⁴²⁶

Su'ād b. 'Umar called upon the Prophet when, as he says, his own cloak bore some marks of a scent mixed with saffron. The Prophet exclaimed, "Saffron! Saffron I lay off !lay off! and hit me with a stick on my stomach which caused me a little pain. Su'ād said, "O Messenger of god, now I have a right to make requital. " The Prophet at once bared his belly and said, "Have your revenge". ⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ Muslim.

⁴²⁶ Muslim, Kitab-ul-Fada'il.

⁴²⁷ Kitab-us-Shifa, Suad demanded to even the score out of love so that he may kiss the Prophet's belly and not to return blow for blow.

Modesty

The Prophet was absolutely unassuming and modest; he hated to put on airs or to make himself conspicuous on any occasion. He did not even like the people to stand up for showing him respect nor he allowed anybody to extol him in the way the followers of other religions had praised their prophets. He was the Messenger and servant of God and he wanted himself to be known by others in a like manner, neither more, nor less. Anas said that no man was dearer to the Companions than God's Messenger, but they never stood up on seeing him for they knew his dislike for that. ⁴²⁸

Once the Prophet was addressed as the "best of creations." He promptly replied, "That was the position enjoyed by Ibrahim" ⁴²⁹

'Umar reported the Prophet as saying "Do not exalt me as the Christians have exalted Jesus son of Mary. I am just His servant, so call me God's servant and Messenger. ⁴³⁰

'Abdullah b. Abi Aufa' reports "The Messenger of God never disdained to go with a slave or a Widow to accomplish their tasks. "⁴³¹ Anas says that any slave-girl or maidservant of Madina could hold the Prophet by hand and say whatever she liked or take him to the place she desired. ⁴³²

⁴²⁸ Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, Vol. III, p. 132.

⁴²⁹ Muslim, Kitab-ul-Fada'il.

⁴³⁰ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Ambiya.

⁴³¹ Baihaqi.

⁴³² Musnad Ahmad, Vol. III, pp. 189-215, Jam'a ul-Fawaid, Kitab-ul-Manaqib.

When 'Adiy h. Hätim came to see the Messenger, he called him inside his house. A maidservant brought a cushion to rest on but the Prophet placed it between him and 'Adiy and sat down on the floor. 'Adiy later said that he had then immediately realised that the Prophet was not a king. ⁴³³

Anas reported that the Messenger of God used to visit the sick, attend funeral, ride on a donkey and accept a slave's invitation for a meal. ⁴³⁴

Jabir states that the Prophet used to slow down his pace for the sake of the weak and also prayed for them. ⁴³⁵

Anas said: The Prophet accepted an invitation even if 'he was presented a barley bread and soup whose taste had changed. ⁴³⁶ He also reports the Prophet as saying, "I am God's servant, I eat like a servant and sit like a servant. ⁴³⁷

'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'As says: "Once, when the Messenger of God came to my house, I gave him a cushion filled with bark, but he sat down on the floor placing the cushion between me and him. ⁴³⁸

The Messenger, used to tidy up his house, tether the camels, feed animals, take food with his servants and help them in kneading flour and bringing provisions from the market. ⁴³⁹

⁴³³ Zad al-Ma'ad Vol. I, p. 43.

⁴³⁴ Sham'il Tirmidhi.

⁴³⁵ Al-Targhib wal-Tarhib.

⁴³⁶ Sham'il Tirmidhi; Musnad Ahmad, Vol. III, pp. 211-289.

⁴³⁷ Kitab-us-Shifa, p. 101.

⁴³⁸ Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 172.

⁴³⁹ Kitab us-Shifa, p. 101.

Courage and Shyness

Courage and shyness, are often regarded as conflicting traits but the two poised the Prophet's character in a like manner. Being extremely modest, he blushed like a maiden, as stated by Abu Sa'eed Khudri, if he came across anything shocking or outrageous. On such occasions his countenance-changed showing his displeasure. ⁴⁴⁰ Such was his coyness that he was even diffident to express anything disagreeable to one's face and usually asked somebody else to do the job for him. Anas reports that the clothes of a man present in one of his sittings. were hued in yellowish colour. Since the Prophet did not like to say anything displeasing to any one, he said to others, when the man had got up to leave, "It would have been better if you had told him to give up using yellow colour." ⁴⁴¹

'Aisha relates that if the Prophet came to know of a misdeed committed by anybody, he never asked him why he had done it; what he said on such occasions was, "What has happened to the people that say or do such a thing?" He deprecated the wrong but never named the wrongdoer.

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As for the dauntless courage and valour of the Prophet of God, the testimony of 'Ali, the lion of God, is plenty good enough to illustrate the point He says : "When the battle used to become fierce and the eyes seemed to be coming out of the sockets, we were wont to

⁴⁴⁰ Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Manaqib.

⁴⁴¹ Shama'il Tirmidhi, Chap. Khulq an-Nabi.

⁴⁴² Abu Dawud.

look for the Prophet in order to find a refuge behind him. Then, we found none closing up with the enemy as the Prophet. This was how it happened in Badr; we were taking shelter behind the Prophet who was then going at the enemy more closely than anyone of us. "⁴⁴³

Anas said, "The Messenger of God was extremely handsome, most generous and the bravest of men. One night when the people in Madina had been in a panic and some went in the direction of the sound they had heard they were met by the Prophet who had gone in that direction ahead of them, and he was saying, 'Don't fear, don't fear.' He was then on a bare-backed horse without a saddle belonging to Abu and had a sword slung on his neck. Praising the horse he said, 'I found it swift and rushing ahead like an ocean. "⁴⁴⁴

In the battles of Uhud and Hunayn when the Muslims had fallen back and the bravest among them were unable to stand the charge of the enemy, the Messenger of God had stuck to his position, riding his mule, as if nothing had happened, and was calling out, "I am the Prophet without falsehood; I am the son of 'Abdul Muttalib. "

Mercy and Compassion

God's Messenger was the kindest of men just as he excelled all others in courage and valour. Being extremely kindhearted, his eyes brimmed with tears at the slightest sign of inhumanity. Shaddād b. Aus reports

⁴⁴³ Kitab-us-Shifa, p. 89.

⁴⁴⁴ Bukhari, Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 46.

the Messenger as saying, "God has commanded you to show kindness to everyone, so if you have to kill, kill nicely, and if you slaughter an animal, slaughter it gently. If anyone of you has to slay an animal, he should sharpen the blade first and treat the animal well."⁴⁴⁵

Ibn 'Abbās relates that a man threw a goat on its side and then started sharpening his knife. When the Prophet saw him he said, "Do you want to kill it twice? Why did you sharpen the knife before throwing it on the ground?"

The Messenger forbade his Companions to keep the dumb creatures hungry or thirsty, to disturb or to overburden them. He commended that kindness and putting them at ease were meritorious acts tending to bring man nearer to God.

Abu Huraira reports the Prophet as saying, "A traveler who was thirsty saw a well in the way. He got inside the well and when he came out he saw a dog licking mud because of thirst. The man thought himself that the dog should be as thirsty as he was and so he got into the well again, filled his leather sock with water and carried it out holding with his teeth. And thus he quenched the thirst of the dog. God was pleased with this act of kindness and pardoned his sins. 'The Companions asked, "O messenger of God, is there recompense in the matter of beasts and wild animals also?" The Prophet replied, "There is recompense in regard to every creature that has a living heart."⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁵ Muslim, Kitab-uz-Zabih.

⁴⁴⁶ Bukhari and Muslim.

‘Abdullah b. ‘Umar told that the Prophet said, "A woman was cast away into the hell only because she had denied food and water to her cat and refused to set it free so that the cat might satisfy its hunger by taking worms and insects. "⁴⁴⁷

Suhayl b. ar-Rab‘i b. ‘Amr states that the Messenger of God came across a camel so famished that its belly had shrieked to its back. He said, "Fear God in the matter of these dumb creatures. If you ride them, ride when they are healthy and you eat them, eat them when they are in a good condition. "⁴⁴⁸

‘Abdullah b. J‘afar narrated the incident that once the Prophet entered the enclosure of an Ansāri where there was a camel which started groaning on catching sight of the Prophet, was running down its eyes. The Prophet went near it, patted on its hump and face which set it at ease. Then the Messenger asked who its owner was. The Ansāri young men came and said: "O Messenger of God, it belongs to me. " The Prophet said to him, "Do you not fear God in the matter of this beast although He has made you its owner? It complained to me that you bore hard upon it and always kept it at work. "⁴⁴⁹

Abu Huraira quoted the Messenger as saying, "When you travel in a fertile country do not deny the camels their due from the ground, and when you travel in a land barren and dry, cover it with speed. When you encamp at night keep away from the roads, for they are

⁴⁴⁷ Nawawi on the authority of Muslim.

⁴⁴⁸ Abu Dawud.

⁴⁴⁹ Abu Dawud.

where the beasts pass and are the resorts of the insects at night. ⁴⁵⁰

Ibn Mas'ud reports, "While we were on a journey with God's Messenger, he went a short distance from where we had encamped. There we saw a small bird with two of its birdlings and caught them. The bird was fluttering when the Prophet came back and so he asked, 'Who has distressed it by taking its chicks?' Then he asked us to return the chicks. There we also saw 'an ant-hill and burnt it out. When the Prophet saw he asked, 'Who has burnt it?' When we informed him that we had done it, he said, 'Only the Lord of fire has the right to punish with fire. '⁴⁵¹

The Prophet strongly enjoined the duty of kind and generous treatment to the slaves, servants and the labour engaged for manual work. Jabir relates the Messenger of God as saying, "Feed them with the food which you eat, clothe them with such clothing as you wear and do not cause trouble to God's creatures. "⁴⁵² The Messenger is further stated to have said, "Those whom God has made your dependents are your brothers, servants and helpmates. Anybody whose brother has been made subservient to him ought to feed him with the food he eats and clothe him with the clothes he wears, command him not to do that which he is unable to do and if it becomes

⁴⁵⁰ Muslim.

⁴⁵¹ Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Jihad.

⁴⁵² Al-Adab al-Mufrad, p. 38.

necessary to do so then he should help him in doing the job. "⁴⁵³

‘Abdullah b ‘Umar says that once a nomadic Arab came and asked the Prophet, "How many times should, ‘I pardon my servant in a day?" The Prophet replied, Seventy times. "⁴⁵⁴ He also quotes the Messenger as saying, "Pay the wages of a labourer before his sweat dries up. "⁴⁵⁵

His immense affection towards the poor and helpless

Across the *Seerah* literature we encounter numerous instances which make us have an estimate how affectionate, merciful, magnanimous, loveful, forgiver and lenient the Prophet (PBUH) was towards the poor and helpless. In his noble teachings and the prophetic moral philosophy incomparable attention has been given to the poor and the needy. People are not to be disdained merely due to their poverty and need. They deserve every kind of sympathy, love and an affectionate behaviour. The Prophet (PBUH) loved the poor and needy so much that he supplicated to Allah to grant him the life of poverty and the death in the state of poverty and raise him, on the Day of Judgment, in the company of the poor.

Course we really imagine the depth of his love and affection towards the poor and the needy? He wished to live with them and to be raised, on the Day of the, in the company of the poor. The Prophet (PBUH) is reported to have said : "Do not underrate the miserable and the

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wretched. From among them there might be many if they swear by Allah vis -a vis a thing, Allah shall fulfil their oaths. "

He also reported to have said:"Beware of the poor. Many of you are provided with sustenance thanks to their poverty and resourceless. "

He is reporting to have said:

"The poor shall be granted entrance to Paradize five hundred years earlier than the rich. (For this long duration) the latter shall be withheld to clear accounts of their riches. "

In like manner, the Prophet (PBUH), on different occasions, called the attention of the people to the rights of the poor and the deprived and reminded them of their religious and moral responsibilities towards those who have been tasted by Allah with scanty resources of life during their worldly tenure. Such directives of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his personal behaviour towards the poor offer the best example for us to treat this class of the human beings. We need to know these teachings and act upon them. Unless we have part of the deep sympathy towards the poor which the Prophet (PBUH) had in his heart we can not be true Muslims. May Allah ta'ala render easy for us to act upon his directions.

He, the knower of the ways, the chief of all, the Last Prophet,

Who was able to render the dust of the way into the light of the Sinaic Valley.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

UNIVERSALITY OF THE MESSAGE OF ISLAM

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ، وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾

O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner.

And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.

WORLDWIDE PLAN FOR THE PREACHING OF ISLAM

Today the Muslim world is witnessing new reform movements, organizations and growing number of institutions. Each day with the rising Sun the Islamic World is struck with a new voice and each day new conferences hold their meetings and sessions. These conferences and organizations, for the most part, share much the same objectives and intend the ends to the advantage of the Muslim Ummah. This phenomenon speaks well of the fact that this Ummah is still alive and in it there exists a good number of those intellectuals who are fully active and possess an acute sense of their responsibilities towards the Ummah. The absence of such people in a community in sharp contrast, marks the death of that community. Non presence of the reform and constructive movements in the Islamic world is bound to impair it beyond repair. There will be storms of mischiefs, satanism, modernism and libertinism hitting hard the newer generations of the Ummah. If there is no the forces to counter this sinister state of moral rot and social degeneration, the Ummah is bound to disintegrate and total decline and fall under the Divine arrangement, the Muslim Ummah never suffered such a situation, and there have always been emerging such individuals and

organizations which devoted themselves to construct what was destructed and repair what got impaired. This phenomenal abundance of movements growing number organizations and institutions augurs were for a better future of the Ummah. It is because of the reason that it enjoys the presence of such solicitors believes who are courageous enough to take on the tempests of evil and destructive and devilish movements the world abounds in all Ummah. May Allah protect them all and bless them with ths support.

Fundamental Difference between Islam and other Religions

No religion can maintain its vigour for long and offer a satisfying answer to questions of ever-changing life unless it can produce guides and standard-bearers who can infuse a breath of new life into its followers through their personal example of unflinching faith, moral and spiritual excellence, immaculate sincerity, heroic sacrifice, self-confidence, ardent zeal, intellectual eminence and erudite scholarship. Life always poses new problems, temptations of flesh are ever on its side, materialistic urge in man always impels him to take the ways of self-indulgence and licentiousness, and, at the same time, we have always had men who were ardent and zealous supporters of the epicurean view and affluent

living, materialistic brilliance and worldly success. Therefore, unless a religion also gets indefatigable defenders, renovators and redeemers who can face the challenge of atheism and materialism, it cannot hope to remain a living force for its followers for long.

Defence Against Heresy

History bears testimony to the fact that there has never been a spell, however brief, during the past one and a half thousand years when the message of Islam was eclipsed or its teachings were engulfed by heresy, and the Islamic conscience became dormant enough to accept a contaminated faith. Whenever an effort was made from any quarter whatsoever to distort the tenets of Islam, pervert or falsify its teachings, or it was attacked by senseless materialism, some one invariably came forward to accept the challenge and fight it out to the grief of Islam's adversary. History records many a powerful movement in its day, which posed a danger for Islam but now it is difficult to find out even the true impact of its thought. Only a few people know today what *Qadriyah* (Rationalists believing in free will), *Jahmiyah* (Determinists), *Itizal* (Dissenters), creation of the Qur'an, Existentialist Monism, *Din-i-Ilahi*, etc., exactly mean, although these represented, at one time or the other, very important schools of thought and, with the most powerful imperial powers of their day and some

extremely learned and able persons at their back they had threatened to stifle Islam. Finally, however, it was Islam which gained ascendancy over these contending forces. These powerful movements are known today as simply different schools of thought and are to be found now in philosophical and dialectical treatises. This tradition of struggle against un-Islam, the spirit to preserve and renovate the pristine teachings of the faith and the effort to infuse people with a revolutionary spirit to reassert the divine message are as old as Islam itself.

LEGACY OF ISLAM

This is a legacy of Islam which we have inherited. But, by legacy we do not mean here a 'bequest', for Islam is a living religion. What we have really inherited is the treasure consisting of the sureness of conviction, and immutable faith, Traditions of the Prophet, higher moral values, canonical laws and the magnificent Islamic literature which has been bequeathed to us by every single individual who ever worked for the establishment of the kingdom of God, braved the dangers of ignorance and materialism, gave a call for the Din of Allah, revived the teachings of Islam and filled the people with faith and enthusiasm. In truth and reality, all those persons who have re-oriented Islam through painstaking researches into its original sources and re-

interpretation of its doctrines; defended Islam against philosophies and schools of thought incompatible with it; saved it from discord and turmoil ; compiled the Traditions of the Prophet or presided over different schools of Fiqh; showed to others the path of temperance and moderation ; censured the society for its waywardness and made it turn from that path ; dispelled the doubts by examining and elucidating the fundamentals of reason and logic; founded the new science of dialectics; carried on the work left by prophets and apostles of God; filled the people with zeal and self-confidence in their own inherent vitality; made the most inveterate enemies of Islam to acknowledge its truth-in short, all those who have pressed their spiritual, moral and intellectual capabilities to the service of the faith and not unoften, accomplished what emperors and conquerors could never have achieved--- have contributed to the legacy now owned by us and deserve our respect and approbation. Had not these defenders of Islam worked with ardent zeal and immaculate sincerity and made heroic sacrifices for the cause held dear by them, we would not have inherited which still contains a reservoir of guidance and inspiration for us. We can be rightly proud of these ancestors of ours and present with confidence the story of their work and achievements before other nations.

PROPAGATION OF ISLAM

There are two aspects of the Prophet's life which are basically the same i.e. the propagation of Islam and his treatment of non-Muslims. The treatment of non-Muslims in early Muslim society was determined partly by the Prophet's own attitude towards them and partly by the instructions contained in the Qur'an. So far as we know no exhaustive work has yet been produced on this subject. We shall try, therefore, to trace historically the Prophet's reaction to the first revelation and how he communicated the message to others. We shall also see how people reacted to it. Moreover, we shall also attempt to study the Prophet's own attitude, how he faced the opposition and what were the consequences of those actions from the historical point of view. Significantly, the first revelation did not demand propagation. Also there was a pause of three years after the first revelation (96: 1-5) did not demand proselytization, the message began to be propagated.

THE FIRST REVELATION

At the time of the first revelation, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in the cave of Hira. It was the month of December and it was very cold in Makkah. Immediately after the revelation was over

the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to the city. On reaching his house he addressed his wife, saying: "Zammiluni, Zammiluni" (Wrap me up, wrap me up"). It is obvious that she complied with the request. Partly due to extreme cold and partly to fear provoked by the appearance of Gabriel and all what followed, the prophet (peace be upon him) had been shaken.

Soon after the Prophet (peace be upon him) had overcome this feeling he narrated the whole incident to his wife Khadijah and concluded his account with the question: "Was it not the work of Satan? Have I become a diviner even though I have always condemned those who claim to be one"? She assured him that it was not so because he had helped people throughout his life; he had always provided the poor and the needy; he had always looked after orphans and widows; God would not, therefore, abandon such a person, and He would surely not surrender him to Satan. The Wife then stated that her first cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, was very knowledgeable in such matters. She suggested to her husband that he fully explain the phenomenon to him the next morning when they proposed to visit him. Then follow two versions. According to one, Khadijah took the Prophet (peace be upon him) to her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal who was a Christian. According to the other version, Abu Bakr came to visit the

Prophet (peace be upon him) as usual in the morning when khadijah narrated to him the facts of the case or she requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to narrate them to Abu Bakr. She then sent both the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abu Bakr to Waraqah ibn Nawfal of whom it is said that he had lost his eye-sight owing to old-age. After hearing the Prophet's account Waraqah exclaimed: "If whatever you have started is true, it resembles the *nomos* of Moses. If I am alive by the times your nation treats you badly and exiles you from the city, I will support you and strive to resolve your difficulties". The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked: "Will the people treat me cruelly because I convey to them the message of God? Will they persecute me and exile me on this account"? Nawfal said: "Yes, they will. There has been no Prophet who was not persecuted by his people".

What is the significance of the word *nomos* used by Waraqah ibn Nawfal? Some scholars suggest that the word is used for reliability and integrity. This, however, does not seem to suit the context. We could perhaps suggest another meaning. Waraqah ibn Nawfal had embraced Christianity. It is stated by Bukhari that he knew Syriac and had translated the Bible from Syriac into Arabic. Is it not possible, then, that a Greek word was then in use in the Syriac language? In Greek, the Torah is called *nomos*. What Waraqah really meant was that the message revealed

to the Prophet (peace be upon him) resembled the Torah. The word *nomos* fits in eminently in this context, and seems more suitable and reasonable than other explanations.

It is difficult to say what the Prophet (peace be upon him) did after his meeting with Waraqah ibn Nawfal. He probably reiterated the fact of revelation to various people who saw him. We should complete the story of the first revelation by adding some minor details available in al-Baladhuri's *Ansab al-Ashraf*. It is recorded that after having conveyed the first verses of surab -al-Alaq, Gabriel taught the Prophet (peace be upon him) how to clean his body after answering the call of nature. Then he told him about ablutions which prepared a man physically as well as spiritually for the act of worship. Gabriel then led the prayer and the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed behind him. After that Gabriel left.

We should not surprised under the circumstances when biographical accounts about the Prophet (peace be upon him) mention him as occasionally praying publicly along with his wife Khadijah in front of the Ka'bah. The way he prayed was different from that of the Makkans who were surprised at his new postures. The Qur'anic verses which condemn idolatry had not been revealed until then. The new religion, while causing surprise, had not yet provided angry retaliation. In any case there

were no more than three Muslims at the time-Khadijah, Abu Bakr and 'Ali', the young cousin and adopted son of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then followed Zayd, the prophet's freed slave. This was the vanguard of Islam.

PREACHING TO NEAR KINSMEN

It was not before three years after the first revelation that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked to preach to his near relatives: "And warn thy nearest kinsmen" (26: 214). In compliance with the Divine command he adopted a new way of propagation. He asked 'Ali to buy some provisions and requested his wife to make arrangements for a feast. He then dispatched 'Ali to the houses of various relatives and asked them to a meal. The food was scanty and the guests were many (between thirty and forty people). And yet everyone ate heartily. Seeing this miracle Abu Lahab caustically remarked that the host was a magician! The Prophet (peace be upon him) was deeply hurt but did not say anything.

A few days later he arranged treat. On this occasion he came out with a sermon. He requested the guests to stay on after the dinner for he wanted to say something. Everyone was curious why they had been invited. After the meal was over the Prophet (peace be upon him) dilated on the evils of idolatry and the significance of the unity of God. Then he touched on

life hereafter and man's accountability to God. He dwelt briefly on the fundamental principles that he espoused. The account of Tabari in this regard is interesting. He states that the concluding sentence of the Prophet's sermon was probably to the effect that whoever accepted his invitation to faith would one day be his caliph. It is said that 'Ali, who was a young lad at the time, stood up and declared his acceptance of Islam. Abu Lahab, the Prophet's uncle, laughed loudly, clapped his hands and said to Abu Talib: "Congratulations! From now onwards you are a subordinate of your son"! Abu Talib was embarrassed. He did not find it possible for the rest of his life to accept the prophethood of a nephew.

PREACHING TO A WIDER AUDIENCE

After some time the second revelation urging propagation was received: "So declare openly that with which thou art commanded and turn aside from those who ascribe partners to God" (15: 94). The Prophet (peace be upon him) felt some kind of an awe at this command. The whole city worshipped idols. Were he openly to condemn them as false and assert that their idols could not provide them with security and salvation, he would provoke the hostility and ridicule of all the people. Gabriel assured him that in such a situation God would protect him and not abandon him.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then went out of the city. He climbed a hill. Standing on top of a high cliff he summoned the people as if an emergency had suddenly arisen. They came running to him. He announced that he wanted only to address a particular tribe. Those who did not belong to the tribe in question left. Then he named a branch of the tribe and said that he wanted to talk only to that branch. In short, he addressed a limited audience instead of speaking to the whole city.

His address on the occasion was somewhat along the following lines: "O brothers, would you believe if I say that there is an army behind this hill and it waits to attack you"? Their reply was that they had not yet heard an untruth from him and that they would readily believe him if he made a statement that the enemy was in fact camping there. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said that he warned them of a much greater army and that was the retribution and terror of Allah in case they insisted on denying Him and pursued idol worship. In that event Allah would consign them to Hell after death.

Among others that day, the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abu Lahab, was also present. He asked in a rage: "Was it for this useless sermon that you wasted our time"? He then left and others followed him.

ABU LAHAB'S OPPOSITION

It would not be out of place here to examine why Abu Lahab hated his nephew, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Baladhuri relates an incident in *Ansab al-Ashraf*. The two brothers, Abu Lahab and Abu Talib, one quarrelled over a trivial matter. Abu Lahab flung his brother flat on the floor, pounced on his chest and slapped him. The Prophet (peace be upon him), who was a ward of Abu Talib after the death of his grandfather, ran to his rescue and pushed away Abu Lahab from the chest of his brother. Abu Talib got up and settled his score by pushing down Abu Lahab and sitting on his chest. The Prophet (peace be upon him) kept watching the scuffle. Abu Lahab angrily retorted: "O Muhammad! Abu Talib is your uncle and so am I. You helped him. But why did you not come to my rescue? By God, there will be no love for you in my heart ever".

Baladhuri has recorded this trivial incident. It is a psychological fact that sensitive persons can react strongly to apparently small things which leave a lasting effect on them. This was possibly the reason why Abu Lahab developed an intense enmity to his nephew and all that he stood for. He is considered one of the most inveterate enemies of Islam.

As a result of these early efforts at propagation, news spread in the whole city that Muhammad (peace be upon him) claimed to be a Prophet and condemned

the ancestral religion as false and misleading. He was opposed virtually to everything people believed in. Hatred against the Prophet (peace be upon him) became more virulent until city fathers and the local government forbade him to pray in his down peculiar way in front of the Ka'bah. He then began to pray either in his own house or away from the city in an open desert. Unbelievers, however, did not relent in their opposition. They would come to see him and engage him in a discussion in order to ridicule him.

His uncle Abu Lahab was the ring leader of the party. When he came to know that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prayed in the Ka'bah late at night under cover of darkness, he collected thorny branches from the tress and scattered them all over the path. He also used to pile heaps of filfth at the threshold of the Prophet's house. Obstructions notwithstanding, the Prophet (peace be upon him) persevered in his efforts at propagating the faith. But soon he had to face another problem. The people of Makkah encouraged street urchins to pursue the Prophet (peace be upon him) and pelt stones at him. Whenever this happened, according to the historian Maqrizi, he would take refuge in the house of Abu Sufyan if he happened to be near it. Even though he was not a Muslim, Abu sufyan always protected the Prophet (peace be upon him) against the vagabonds, reprimanded them and

made them run away. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would then safely return to his house.

After having mentioned this incident Maqrizi refers to a later incident. At the eve of the conquest of Makkah there was a crier at the head of every contingent. The crier, while passing through the streets of the city, shouted aloud that everyone who laid down arms would be safe, everyone who remained indoors would be safe, everyone who sought refuge in the Ka'bah would be safe, and everyone who went to the house of Abu Sufyan would also be safe. Maqrizi suggests that this distinction was conferred on Abu Sufyan because, before Migration, he used to protect the Prophet (peace be upon him) from nasty scoundrels in the streets of Makkah.

DELEGATION TO THE NEGUS

The campaign of propagation continued for four or five years. The persecution by the pagans became so intense during this period that it became impossible for Muslims to remain in the country. Some of them, therefore, left for Abyssinia on the advice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who told them that the Christian king there was kind and tolerant. Since there was freedom of religion in Abyssinia, the emigrants from Makkah also began to

preach their own religion with the result that within a few years some forty Abyssinians embraced Islam.

But there were difficulties as well. The pagans of Makkah sent a delegation to the Negus and they demanded that their compatriots from Makkah should be handed over to them. They wanted to take the Muslims back with them to renew the process of persecution. But the Negus did not make an arbitrary decision. He sent for the Muslims and told them that it was alleged that they were renegades from Makkah from where they had fled in order to escape punishment for crimes they had committed there. Ja'far al-Tayyar, the first cousin of the Prophet (peace be upon him), spoke on behalf of the Muslims from Makkah. Before we deal with his speech we should like to offer a personal inference which is not mentioned in historical works.

Among the letters of the Prophet (peace be upon him) we have one which is addressed to the Negus. It says: "I am sending my cousin Ja'far to you. Offer hospitality to him and his companions on arrival. Treat them well and do not be stubborn in this regard". Tabari has included this letter among the events of 7 AH. It is possible that it was given to Ja'far al-Tayyar as a letter of introduction and he delivered it to the Negus in the fifth year of prophethood. In 7 AH the Muslim emigrants to Abyssinia were already returning to Madinah after a stay of fifteen years. It

would be meaningless, therefore, to present the letter of introduction at the time of departure for Madinah. Despite the silence of historians on this issue, it needs to be stated that the letter in question was carried by the first emigrants from Makkah to Abyssinia.

Incidentally, the Negus of Abyssinia, according to the historian Suhayli, was once obliged to live in Arabia in order to escape from the clutches of his uncle who was a tyrant. He lived in Badr, a place where the Quraysh caravans halted on their way to and from Syria. It is quite possible that the Prophet (peace be upon him) who also travelled in these caravans might have met him personally in Badr.

Reverting to Ja'far's defence of Islam in the court of the Negus, he availed himself of the opportunity to dwell on the leading features of the faith. He also explained why Muslims were accused of disturbing law and order. He concluded his defence by quoting from the Qur'an and read a few verses from *surah Maryam* (*surah*19) in which it has been stated that with Divine command Mary gave birth to Jesus without a father. At hearing this, historians narrate, the Negus picked-up a straw and said that Jesus was not a bit more than this (i.e, straw) and that whatever was narrated in the Qur'anic verses was absolutely correct.

It is not known for certain whether the Negus accepted Islam but there are indications that he did.

His conversion to Islam might have taken place later if not at the time of Ja'far's address because, according to Bukhari, the Prophet (peace be upon him) led a funeral prayer in absentia when he received news in Madinah of the Negus' death. It is obvious that he could not have offered such a prayer for an unbeliever. It is reasonable to presume, therefore, that the Negus had embraced Islam and that he had conveyed this information to the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The failure of the Makkan delegation to obtain the expulsion of Muslims from Abyssinia provoked hostile reaction in Makkah where the persecution of Muslims was further intensified. Among other measures the Quraysh decided on a total boycott of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his family. No one was allowed to have matrimonial relations with them; no one was to sell any merchandise to them. Even conversation was forbidden. This declaration was written on a parchment and hung in the Ka'bah. The Makkans were determined fully to observe it. The boycott continued for several years. A number of Muslims died in consequence owing to starvation. The Banu Hashim suffered untold misery. The boycott, however, eventually ended.

PERSECUTION AND VISIT TO TA'IF

when the Prophet (peace be upon him) returned to the city, he was deeply distressed to discover that people were not willing even to hear the world Islam. It was during this period that Abu Talib died, and the other uncle, Abu Lahab, somehow managed to become head of the tribe. The first step he took was to excommunicate the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the tribe which meant that his tribe would no longer seek the customary revenge if the Prophet (peace be upon him) was killed.

The shield of tribal protection was thus withdrawn. The action compelled the Prophet (peace be upon him) to leave the city and preach elsewhere. He selected Ta'if for this purpose. This was the city of his relatives from the mother's side. He went there with high hopes but he had to face more trouble in Ta'if than he had met in Makkah. The relatives discouraged him and asked the nephew to leave the city or else his life would not be safe there. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was obliged to leave.

As he came out of the city street urchins followed him and pelted stones at him at the instigation of the elders. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was wounded. Outside the city he saw an orchard at whose gate stood a guard. With his permission he entered the orchard. The guard was a kind-hearted Christian. He scared away the urchins and offered hospitality to the visitor with the

permission of his master who was a resident of Makkah. He offered the Prophet (peace be upon him) a bunch of grapes.

An incident then took place. It could be considered an indirect way of propagation. The Prophet (peace be upon him) began to eat grapes after pronouncing Bismillah ("in the name of Allah"). The guard was taken aback and asked about the formula with which he was not familiar. The visitor told him that he was a Prophet (peace be upon him) and God had commanded him to begin everything with His name. He then asked the guard about his identity. He disclosed that he was a Christian originally from Ninevah (now Mosul) and that he was a slave. The Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked that he guard was resident of a town in which his brother Prophet Yunus (Jonah) used to live. At this the Christian spontaneously kissed the feet of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him how he knew that Yunus used to live there.

FIRST RAY OF HOPE

The Prophet (peace be upon him) then left for Makkah. At some distance from the orchard he felt somewhat tired and stopped there. The night had fallen. He began to pray and concluded with a prayer which is so powerful and poignant that it leaves a deep impression on one's mind even today. It was

something to this effect: "O Allah! I beseech You in my helplessness. People find me weak. But You alone are the Lord of the oppressed. O my God! What should I do? Distant relations are treating me with disdain. Near relations have become my enemies. Still I am not daunted if only I know that You are not angry with me. I seek safety and refuge in You and Your pleasure alone I crave for From You alone I seek strength and power to pursue the cause". Such was the resolve and determination of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to do his duty despite all difficulties, dangers and obstacles in his way.

It was a Divine text. The Prophet (peace be upon him) came out of it triumphant. "A hundred thousand stars bleed for the sake of a dawn", says Muhammad Iqbal. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had barely finished his prayer when signs of its acceptance already began to appear. The prayer had been answered. An importance event occurred. The Prophet (peace be upon him) received the revelation which began with the words: "Say: It has been revealed to me that a company of the *jinn* listened, and they said: "Truly we have heard a Qur'an that is wonderful" (72: 1).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) neither saw nor felt the presence of the *jinn*. He became aware of them only when God gave him the news. This meant that he was a Prophet (peace be upon him) not only

for mankind but for the *jinn* as well. If men were rejecting his message, at least *jinn* were responding to him. This was the first ray of hope he saw in a dismal state of deep disappointment.

Slowly the Prophet (peace be upon him) began to walk back to Makkah. A new trouble awaited him there. After rejection by Abu Lahab and his departure from the city he had lost the nationality of Makkah. He could not, therefore, enter the city unless one of its inhabitants offered him asylum. He gave some money to a Bedouin and asked him to go to a certain relative of his mother with a request for asylum. He returned with the message that the man in question had declined the request because he was a resident of Ta'if and not of Makkah, and could not, therefore, exercise the right. He gave some more money to the Bedouin and sent him to a relative of his wife, Sawdah. He too declined. He then sent the same person to a relative of Khadijah. His response was positive. Along with his children and near relatives he came fully armed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and took him to Makkah under his protection. In defence to the established custom the Prophet (peace be upon him) had first to go round the Ka'bah before proceeding to his house. He performed the rite publicly and then went home.

Before his journey to Ta'if the Prophet (peace be upon him) had lost his uncle Abu Talib and then his wife, Khadijah, the two pillars of support. It was

in this state of grief that he had gone to Ta'if. On return to Makkah he lost his nationality and was treated as an alien in the protection of a citizen. Having been stripped of his civic rights he did not enjoy the freedom to participate in the political life of the city and could not, therefore, speak about his creed. God provided a solution to the impasse. According to the customary law of Makkah general amnesty was proclaimed during the period of pilgrimage. Even murderers and criminals who remained underground throughout the year came out in the open during the Hajj season and enjoyed freedom of movement. In view of the confirmed enmity of the Makkans to Islam, the Prophet (peace be upon him) thought of approaching pilgrims from other tribes who came to Makkah for the pilgrimage. He met with some success in this direction. According to Ibn Hisham, the Prophet (peace be upon him) approached at least fifteen tribes. He asked them to accept Islam which would make it possible for them to inherit the treasures of the Caesar and Chosroes but they did not respond. The sixteenth group which consisted of six persons from Madinah was the only exception. The six looked at each other as if it was a visual consultation. After some initial hesitation they accepted the invitation to embrace Islam. This was the first Covenant of 'Aqabah.

FIRST CONVENANT OF 'AQABAH

A large number of jews at that time lived in Madinah. Whenever there was an altercation between the Arabs and the Jews the latter always warned Arabs of the advent of the last Prophet (peace be upon him) whom they would follow. And this, they said, would mean the extinction of Arabs. For all their men, women children would then be put to the sword.

These men of Madinah to whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) was preaching in Makkah thought of pre-empting the Jews by being the first to embrace Islam. That is why they were exchanging glances as if they were talking through their eyes. All of them sincerely accepted Islam. On return to Madinah they began to preach it to others with some success. A year later twelve new converts came to Makkah during the month of Dhu'l-Hijab and took the oath at the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) at 'Aqabah.

After this we come across a few interesting events. The Prophet (peace be upon him) nominated twelve men who belonged to different tribes as his representatives among their respective people. And he named one of them as the chief. This step is indicative of his preference for discipline and his awareness of the need to create a system with a central administration.

His act of nomination demonstrated that the people nominated by him could also be removed by him and were, therefore, subordinate to him. They were bound to carry out his orders. The nominees requested for a teacher who could accompany them to Madinah and help spread the message. The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr, an extremely sincere Muslim, who had a good idea of the psychology of people. He was eminently suitable for the purpose in view. It is recorded that he scored a spectacular success in converting a large number of people including the most unsophisticated lot. An interesting case might be mentioned in this connection.

EXAMPLES OF PROPAGATION

Mus'ab was once preaching to a crowd of slaves- men, women and children- in an orchard. The owner did not like it. He sent a servant to take him to task for trespass and throw him out of the orchard. The man had already become a Muslim. He made an excuse and returned to tell the master that the intruder was adamant and suggested that he should personally proceed to expel him.

In fact he had wanted that the master should listen to the preacher who charmed everyone into embracing Islam through the power of eloquence and the magic of his speech. The master came arrogantly

flying his spear in the air and threatened to kill the preacher if he did not immediately leave the premises. Instead of being scared, Mus'ab welcomed him with a smile and said; "Allow me to ask a question: Why do you want to turn me out without finding out, in the first instance, what I am trying to say? Would it not be more appropriate if you were to listen to what I am saying and then you have an absolute right to throw me out". The man stuck his spear into the ground and sat down, and asked Mus'ab to proceed with his speech. He began as usual with the recitation of a verse from the Qur'an. It had a soothing effect.

Instead of anger and resentment, signs of calm and a new consciousness began to appear on his face. Before the recitation was over he got up and asked how he could become a Muslim. Then he affirmed God's unity and Muhammad's (peace be on him) Messengership and became a believer. He got up flying his spear in the air and went to his house. There he asked the entire household - women, children and slaves - to gather around him. He asked them who he was and they replied that he was their leader, the most wise of all. Then he ordered all of them to become Muslims or else he would be their sworn enemy. The whole family embraced Islam.

Obviously with the conversion of the leader it becomes relatively easy to convert those subordinate to him. We come across various ways of propagating

Islam. This is one of them. There are many instances in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which show how he propagated Islam, but we will cite just a few and then conclude.

A stranger once came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and was treated as a guest. He was given food to eat and a room to sleep in. He was in fact an enemy and had come with bad intentions. Early in the morning he relieved himself in the bed and left before anyone woke up. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to his room in the morning he saw the muck and started washing the bed with his own hands. He noticed that the guest had inadvertently left his sword behind.

The stranger missed the sword after he had covered some distance and returned to recover it. He had thought that people would still be asleep and that he would quickly make away with the sword. But he saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) cleaning his bed with his own hands. Instead of cursing or threatening him the Prophet (peace be upon him) softly stated that he had forgotten his sword and could take it away. As a result of this treatment the stranger spontaneously said: "I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", So saying he embraced Islam.

There is another incident. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was leading a military expedition. The enemy fled on receiving the news. They were not able to go very far because the area was hilly and had to seek safety in a narrow pass or a valley. The head of the tribe climbed up the hill to survey the field. It rained that day with the result that the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions were dispersed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) lay down alone under a tree. He hung his shirt on a branch of the tree so that it would dry up. The enemy spotting him alone confronted him. Drawing his sword he shouted: "Who will save you from me, O Muhammad"? The Prophet (peace be upon him) was perfectly calm. "Allah"! he replied. The entry was so overwhelmed with the monosyllable that his hand began to shake and the sword fell on the ground. The Prophet (peace be upon him) picked it up and asked: "Who will save you now from me"? The enemy replied: "Nobody". The Prophet (peace be upon him) returned his sword and forgave him. The result was that the enemy immediately recited the formula affirming God's unity and Muhammad's Messengership and embraced Islam. He returned to his tribe to preach it to others.

There is also that famous incident after the conquest of Makkah when the Prophet (peace be upon him) proclaimed general amnesty for all. The

result was the overnight conversion of the entire population of Makkah. These were the means he adopted to propagate Islam. The result is known to all.

SUCCESS ACHIEVED BY THE PROPHET

A comparative study of the number of people converted by different Prophets would reveal the extraordinary success achieved by Muhammad (peace be upon him). Judging from the relevant details on the subject in the Bible, the maximum number of converts at the hands of Jesus did not exceed the number of forty.

It is said of Moses that his people whose number, according to the Bible, was half a million, lent him full support but it was confined only to securing freedom from the tyranny of the Pharaoh. The number of true converts was almost cipher. After the exodus from Egypt Moses asked his followers to capture Palestine, a gift promised them by God. They refused on the plea that they could not fight tyrants. If God had made the promise, they said, "Go thou and thy Lord and fight, and here we sit"! (5: 24). In other words, the whole community disobeyed and refused to resolutely carry out the Divine command. There were only two of his servant who later became a Prophet i.e, Joshua. Except for the two not a soul followed Moses.

Jesus had twelve faithful disciples. Of these St Peter was one. His grave is in the Vatican in Italy. Of him Jesus says in the Bible: "Go! O Satan"! This indictment must be due to some action of his. Another disciple was Yahuda, who turned apostate. He betrayed Jesus to the authorities who were looking for him. As against this, the number of people who embraced Islam at the hands of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is too much larger.

We do not have the exact figures but an approximate assessment is possible. At the time of the Farewell Pilgrimage, historians reckon a crowd of 140,000 in the plain of 'Arafat. And Hajj is not an obligation which everyone has to discharge every year. It is obvious that all the Muslims had not gathered there. Assuming that one out of every five performed *Hajj*, the total would work out at over half a million. The figure compares fairly favourably with the total of forty converts to Christianity during the life of Jesus.

Moreover, the incidence of apostasy in the history of Islam has been very rare. We come across only one or two cases of this nature during the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). But strictly speaking, the people concerned were hypocrites rather than Muslims. They had put on the mask of Islam with a view to subvert it from within. It is only

when they failed to achieve their objective that they openly declared their disbelief.

POLICY TOWARDS NON-MUSLIMS

Let us conclude with a brief account of the policy and attitude of Islam towards non-Muslims. Everyone is familiar with the principle propounded in the Qur'anic verses: "There should be no compulsion in religion" (2: 256). "The duty is only to convey the Message" (42: 48). Compulsion is thus ruled out for the purpose of propagation of Islam. The duty of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is merely to communicate and propagate the Message. The result is in the Hand of God. Of the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the regime of his Rightly-Guided Caliphs it can be said without any fear of contradiction that no one was ever converted through compulsion.

The Qur'an lays down a unique principle in regard to the treatment of non-Muslims. It grants complete autonomy to every religious community which enjoys not only freedom of faith and worship in its own way but is free to follow its own laws and decide cases through its own judges. The concept of complete internal autonomy has been advanced in a number of Qur'anic verses, one of which is extremely clear: "And let the people of the Gospel judge according to what Allah has revealed therein" (5: 47).

This means that Christians should judge according to the laws given by God in the Bible. In deference to this principle, every religious community was granted complete autonomy during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They enjoyed as much freedom in respect of their religion, worship and legal matters as did any Muslim. A little later a new development took place. It was made incumbent on every Muslim to participate in *jihad* but non-Muslims were exempted from this duty for the simple reason that they could not be compelled to wage a war for the sake of Islam. Muslims defended the frontiers of the state and laid down their lives for it but non-Muslim subjects of the state enjoyed the fruits of peace, safety and security. They only paid a small price for this enviable privilege, by way of a tax called *jizyah*. This was not an innovation of Islam. It was the legacy of Iran where those who did not discharge military duty had to pay this tax. Islam inherited the institution from Iran. The tax on non-Muslim subjects was very light. It was equivalent to ten day's food in a year - a small price to pay for being guaranteed full protection as a citizen and exemption from military duties.

No discrimination was exercised against non-Muslims on the basis of religion. In 2 AH, after the Muslim victory in the Battle of Badr, Makkans sent yet another delegation to the Negus with a view to

seek the repatriation of Muslims from Abyssinia so that they could be persecuted at home. To counter the move, the Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a non-Muslim, 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Damri, as his ambassador to the court of the Negus.

The attitude of the Prophet (peace be upon him) towards his Jewish neighbours was kind and cordial. He always visited their homes to enquire after the health of their sick children. There was a Jewish tribe by the name of Banu 'Arid in Madinah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) had been pleased with them for some reason and had fixed an annual stipend for them. Whenever the funeral of a Jew passed by in a street the Prophet (peace be upon him) always stood up as a mark of sympathy.

The attitude of Muslims towards their non-Muslim compatriots was one of kindness, consideration and extreme tolerance. They reciprocated the generous treatment with their trust and loyalty. A civil war started in the Muslim state during the Caliphate of 'Uthman and continued down the ages but never once did non-Muslim subjects raise a standard of revolt. They sided neither with one nor the other party. They always remained neutral and never took advantage of the situation. The thought of betrayal or revolt never crossed their mind. The ruler of Byzantium strongly urged the Christian subjects of Islam to rise in revolt while a civil war was raging

between 'Ali' and Mu'awiyah. He promised to liberate them by attacking Muslims, but he did not succeed in provoking a rebellion. The efforts continued down the ages until the Crusades but the Christian subjects of Islam always responded by saying that they preferred the pagan ruler (i.e. the Muslims) to their co-religionists.

The reason for this loyalty was the fact that Muslims never compelled Christians to abandon their religion. They enjoyed complete religious freedom. Their religious institutions received aid and assistance from Muslims. We have an authentic original document belonging to the period of 'Umar in which a Christian gives the good news to his co-religionists in another city saying that a new nation had taken over as their ruler but it did not indulge in tyranny. On the contrary it protected their churches and gave financial aid to their converts.

The Expeditions at a Glance

The expedition of Tabuk, which took place in the month of Rajab, 9 A. H., was the last campaign during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet. The number of his battles was twenty-seven while he is reported to have sent out sixty forays and expeditions, although no fighting and taken place in many of them.

Never in the history of human conflicts had any conqueror shed so little blood and was crowned

with such a remarkable success. In all these battles only 1018 persons, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, lost their lives. But, it would be to attempt the impossible to have any guess as to how much blood of the ferocious Arabs was saved from being spilled or how many souls escaped degradation and debasement because of this negligible loss of human life. Such was the public tranquility and orderliness resulting from the Prophet's campaigns that a woman pilgrim would go from Hira to Mecca and return after circumambulating the K'aba without any fear in her heart save that of God. Another report says that the women from Qadessia went alone on their dromedaries for pilgrimage to Mecca without the least anxiety or fear. This was the country in which, from the time immemorial, fights and forays, battles between nomadic tribes and raids on one another's flocks and property had been accepted as unquestionable as a part of the desert life. Even the caravans of neighbouring powerful kingdoms dared not cross the country in pre-Islamic days without powerful escorts and guides.

The campaigns of the Holy Prophet were warranted by two universal truths enunciated in the Qur'an. One of these says that 'persecution is worse than slaughter, and the other declares. There is life for you in retaliation, O men of understanding." These twin principles, which aimed at refusal to acquiesce in

wrongdoing and urged to strive for the defence of honour and justice, very soon established peace and order at the cost of minimum labour and time on the part of Muslims under the benevolent and elaborate guidance of the Prophet who was ever vigilant to secure the well-being and enlightenment of the enemy instead of allowing the satisfaction of vindictive feelings to become the objective of his campaigns. Whenever the Apostle sent out any detachment for forays or gave battle to the enemy, he invariably issued strict instructions to his men to be God-fearing and kind to the friends as well as to the foes. The directions he once gave to his troops were:

"I ask you to fear God and to be considerate to the Muslims with you. Fight in the name of God and slay those in His name who have disbelieved Him. Neither should you break your promise, nor pilfer the spoils, nor kill any child or women or a man infirm and old or a priest who has withdrawn to seclusion. Never lay your hands on a date-palm, nor chop down a tree, nor yet pull down any building."

And, how successful were these campaigns of the Apostle can be judged from the fact that within a brief period of ten years more than a million square miles was won for Islam : the Islamic state expanded at an average rate of some 274 square miles daily at the cost of one martyr a month. This respect for human blood is unequalled in the annals of man. The

truth of this assertion is amply borne out if the losses of these campaigns are placed by the side of casualties in the last two world wars, the first of which was fought from 1914 to 1918 and the second from 1939 to 1945. According to computation of the Encyclopedia Britannica, 64 hundred thousand persons lost their lives in the first war and the number of casualties in the second ranged between 35 and 60 millions.

Yet, none of these two blood-stained wars can be claimed to have done any good to the humanity nor did they solve any problem of the world.

The ecclesiastical tribunals, known as Inquisitions, established by the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages for the trial and punishment of heretics are reported to have taken the toll of 12 million lives (John Devenport : Apology for Muhammad and Quran).

Differences between the Makkars and Madinan approaches of Dawah and Preaching

In comparison to the thirteen - year long period of the Prophet he spent in Makkah, the results of the work of *dawah* during the ten-year long sojourn in Madina are far too outshining. In the course of the Madinan period, a much larger part of the land was conquered and the territorial boundaries of the newly established Islamic state were expanded first time in

the history of the Arabia. The number of the Companions and mujahids of the Holy Prophet (SAWS) attending him at the historic juncture of the Last Pilgrimage runs into tens of thousands.

For this yawning difference between the results of the Holy Prophet's and his dedicated Companions' preaching efforts the following reasons might be assigned:

- Makka lacked the protective shield for Muslims.
- It, in the like manner, lacked even the most essential resources for organisations and institutionalisation of the work of *dawa* and preaching the message of Islam. Considering from the viewpoint of *dawah* opportunities there, Makka remained a place of extreme religious persecution and unfriendly to the promotion of the message of Islam.
- For the most part, the Makkan period remained the centre of focus of the ideological preaching of the primary tenets of Islam; and there was hardly anything to offer any attraction to the people .
- *Tazkiya of Nafs*, purification of the soul, was the most focal point of all efforts there, away from an environment of confrontation against the persecutors. And permission was never granted to come into armed conflict with the savage persecutors, the repeated wishes of Muslims notwithstanding . In total contrast, in Madinah

the permission to fight the forces of persecution was granted in unambiguous words, besides concentrating on self- purification. For the Muslims in Madina were no longer in need to suppress their defence impulsives. They now needed to divert their defence capabilities against the evil forces.

Important lessons to be drawn from the Prophetic Approach of the preaching of Islam

Premised on this short analysis of the reasons that operated in both the centres of Islamic *dawah*, we may safely draw some great lessons. For a history student these lessons might not hold much good ; a sensitive and wakeful believer, however, holds them dear and uses them to secure more insights to be used to enhance his present and build prospects for his better religious future. Such points may be summarised as follows:

- No religious movement could ever be successful unless the working individuals attain a high degree of self purification and build their character along the lines of original Islamic teachings. Morally uneducated herd of people can achieve no remarkable and enduring success. Such a herd is very much like a hillock unable to withstand, even the slightest push of air.

- Since every new movement, sacred or secular, is bound to face hardships, especially in its initial phase, this makes it incumbent that working people must have a higher degree of constancy, immaculate sincerity, godliness and an unflinching faith in the soundness of their ideal goal. A lack of constancy in other indispensable qualities is bound to displease and bore them even in the face of an ordinary ordeal. Lack of godliness and solicitude, likewise, will breed only the hypocrites who may any time hit the movement even much harder than the outside enemy. Concentration of attention in the pursuance of a goal is of course a precondition without which all efforts are bound to go waste and bear no positive result, and the movement will eventually will ruine.
- The members of the struggling and the endeavouring group have always to be encouraged to be competitive, rather aggressive, towards the opposing and destructive forces. Instilling in their hearts the feelings of retreat and defeat shall doubtlessly prove to be self-destructive, ultimately doomed to meet the same fate as proved a natural truth to Christianity and Gandhism.

- The supporting individuals and groups be better equipped with the newest possible military ways of fighting and an adroit use of their weaponry during the real time military confrontation with the forces of devil. They should be made so agile that a slighter point is sufficient for their forceful activation.
- Cultivating higher moral qualities in the associated people and unleashing their potentials in such a way as to enable them shoulder any type of responsibility when nudged.
- The leadership should concentrate all its attention and efforts on a particular area, without unnecessarily scattering the attention to any areas a lying outside the centre of attention. Decentralisation of the efforts, even if the workforce is much mightier, will obviously harm the progress of the movement and the working group may take very much time to achieve the ideal goal. Whatever the Holy Prophet (SAWS) achieved within a span of just two decades offers a most conspicuous example to this effect. Had the Holy Prophet (SAW) started his work with a universal address from the first day, it would have been very unlikely for all of his efforts to achieve such an uncomparably greater success. For

spreading one's efforts to unmanageable limits is bound to distract the attention and waste the time and resources. For all people and movements meant to reform the Holy Prophet's example should work as a perfect role model. Without following his guidelines no reform movement could ever receive real success.

- Creating a deeper sense of responsibility in each and every member of the group. To this effect the Holy Prophet (SAWS) has aptly said : Beware! All of you are responsible and every responsible shall be accountable to his subjects.
- Conferring the official positions only on the people of trust. The men at the helm must not use their position for their undue benefits. Obedience and respect to the governors and commanders is a duty of the subjects. The person going against the command of the ruler in fact disobeys Allah. An open rebellion against the *amir* is a much graver sin leading to capital punishment.
- Before resorting to a negative step to counter the enemy , all positive steps have to be tried. To be precise, violence has always to be met with positive steps and an open confrontation has to be avoided as far as possible. Their doubts have to be cleared, and their

unnecessary apprehensions have to be removed with a wise policy. In case the circumstances necessitate the confrontation, the activity must be decisive and swift, involving less resources, both human and material.

- Foreign policy should be too strong to be disturbed by any third power. Pacts should be formed and guarded with a cute sense of caution and watchfulness. Conspirators have to be duly punished.
- For the dessimation of one's ideals on a wider scale the means of communication might be used. The focus, however, should be on the living people to epitomize those ideas and moral qualities. Cultural identity and the national language have to be preserved at all cost.
- These are the important points which the practical aspect of the Seerah reflect well.
- Most of the movements of the modern age go against the Prophetic way of gradual development. From the very first day of their launch these reform movements begin dreaming a universal character by spreading their efforts beyond their potential limits. This results in their total failure. As far as the planning is concerned , the movement should be universal. The efforts, however, should

better be concentrated on a particular area. Only this approach could ensure positive results.

- The movements of the recent past which achieved remarkable success in their areas of activity remind us of the fact. In spite of their courage, zeal and a wider range of their reform programme, such movements focussed their concentration on particular areas and regions. This concentration ensured them the amplitude of success and great achievements which otherwise were unthinkable.

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